

Testimony of Gail Santy, Central Kansas Library System to the
House Taxation Committee
Opponent for SB 13 • January 18, 2021

Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to supply written testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 13 which would require multicounty entities to publish notice of the intent to exceed the revenue neutral rate on the website and to notify each taxpayer by email with prior approval or by mail directed to the taxpayer's last known address. As the director of the Central Kansas Library System, serving 16 taxing counties, I feel strongly that the cost of printing and mailing these notifications will place an unnecessary cost burden on the rural taxpayers. Senate Bill 13 states the cost borne by the taxing subdivision shall be shared equally by all taxing subdivisions.

By Kansas statute, Regional Library Systems were established as multicounty taxing entities charged with improving library service where it exists and providing service where none exists. The Systems are funded exclusively by a mill levy on those properties so rural that they don't pay a local library tax. The seven Regional Library Systems in Kansas meet the statute in different ways, customized to their region. Some Systems provide a service of rotating books which supplement the local library collection and most provide digital ebooks and downloadable audiobooks to supplement those available through the State Library of Kansas. All the Systems provide technology support, consulting, continuing education to public, school, and academic librarians, and direct financial aid to public libraries.

Also by statute, the Regional Library Systems annually post advance notice of the budget hearing in the largest every newspaper in each of the taxing counties. These budget hearings are open to the public.

All the Systems are very conscientious about careful use of the dollars they receive from rural taxpayers. At the Central Kansas Library System, we reduced the total amount of dollars received in 2020 versus 2019 by \$92,504.96. We are mindful that we have more oil producing counties than the other Systems and that oil valuation could drop as much as 40% this year. Bearing that in mind, we greatly reduced operating expenses, which means that we will levy less money again in 2021.

Senate Bill 13 will place an unnecessary burden on our rural tax payers. CKLS and the other six Regional Library Systems will be required to mail notification, which will cost upwards of an average of \$8,000 every year, depending on the rural population count. Assuming an average of \$8,000 per System, the mail notification requirement will cost rural Kansas taxpayers upwards of \$56,000.

Just as we are seeing a steady downward trend in total dollars taxed, CKLS will have to increase our mill levy just to fund that mailing notification requirement and other Regional Library Systems may be forced to do the same.

I don't think the writers of Senate Bill 13 thought about those multi-county entities such as the Regional Library Systems that are funded by rural taxpayers, not just in Central Kansas, but all across Kansas. Our rural taxpayers should not have to bear the burden of that additional cost and as Senate Bill 13 is heard, I urge you to move to exempt Regional Library Systems from the annual notification.

Respectfully,



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