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Testimony Supporting HB 2207

By Karl Peterjohn, Executive Director

Taxpayers need to know that the billions of dollars being spent by the state are actually being spent in a proper and useful manner. Accountability for these billions is needed with the state's General Fund budget at \$6 billion and its All Funds budget exceeding \$12 billion next year. HB 2207 would be a positive step in helping achieve these informational goals by providing an online presence for state spending that currently does not exist today.

That would provide clarity as well as accountability. This would be helpful since many taxpayers find it tough to figure out the financial situation of the state and this has an impact on their income and their lives. State spending is a huge factor affecting life in Kansas. The elected officials who appropriate money as well as the elected officials who administer these budgets must work to make sure that state funds are spent efficiently and effectively.

The state's expenditures need to be fully aired and readily available for the average Kansan to see and review. HB 2207 would provide spending clarity that is currently missing. A couple of years ago there was news coverage and the resulting public discussion about the wasteful state purchases of automobiles that were not needed.

That was a case of wasteful fiscal spending that was found. Were there others? Kansas taxpayers hope not, but I for one, do not know. HB 2207 would be a useful tool in examining the actual spending activities in this state.

Today there are communication and documentation enhancements that now exist that could not even be envisioned a generation ago. The ability of people to access and use information is increasing at an incredible pace. The number of people who can use this new technology and information is growing. HB 2207 would help the people of Kansas take advantage of this technology and put it to use.

This bill is an enhancement of the open meetings/open records act to make this information more accessible for every Kansan with an interest in the activities of their government. This is an important step forward that follows similar efforts in other states as well as in Washington. Kansas needs to keep pace with this information technology revolution that is going on all around us.

That is why the Kansas Taxpayers Network urges this committee to report HB 2207 favorable for passage.