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Hearing on HB2717: Concerning the Prohibition of Local Entities from Preventing the Enforcement of Federal Immigration Laws

Chairman Barker, Vice Chair Arnberger, and Members of the Committee

I appreciate you all giving me the time to give testimony before the committee today in regard to HB2717. My name is Logan Byrd, and I am a junior at Wichita State University studying political science and was born in Salina, KS, and currently reside in Wichita, Kansas. I have joined you all today to discuss why voting against HB2717 is imperative for the well being and safety of Kansas residents.

This proposed bill is an attack on small government in Kansas. HB 2717 creates an unfunded state mandate on local police to enforce federal law even though our police are already stretched with local mental health, gun violence and substance abuse cases. Immigration law is federal law. There is neither funding for nor any requirement that local police or sheriffs enforce or cooperate in the enforcement of immigration law, actions for which they are not trained. The Safe and Welcoming Act in fact does not ban cooperation with federal immigration authorities if the public safety is at risk. What the Safe and Welcoming ordinance does is set boundaries and clear guidelines as to what level of cooperation a municipality should have with federal agencies like ICE, but in no way does it prohibit that cooperation.

On top of all of this, this bill would create a fearful rhetoric within the immigrant population in Wyandotte county, whether documented or not, further causing strain on the relationship between the people and the police.

I strongly urge you all to vote against this bill, and thank you all once again for allowing me to speak my thoughts today.