



Crime Trends and Threats to Public Safety

Kansas Bureau of Investigation
Executive Officer Robert Jacobs
Director Kirk Thompson

Our Mission

The mission of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation is to provide professional investigative, laboratory, and criminal justice information services to Kansas criminal justice agencies for the purpose of promoting public safety and preventing crime.



Focused Threats to Public Safety

- ◆ Violent Crime
- ◆ Crimes Against Children
- ◆ Illicit Narcotics
- ◆ Cyber Security and Cyber Crime
- ◆ Civil Unrest
- ◆ Property Crime and Catalytic Converters Thefts
- ◆ License Plate Readers
- ◆ Recruitment



National Crime Data

- ◆ FBI – Uniform Crime Report
- ◆ Violent Crime Occurred Every 24.7 seconds
- ◆ Property Crime Occurred Every 4.9 seconds



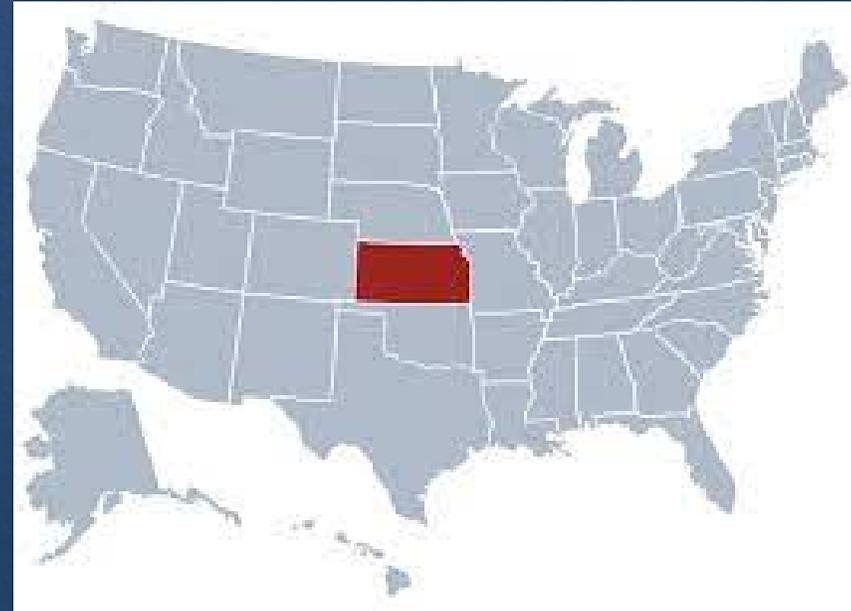
National Violent Crime Data

- ◇ Overall crime in the United States declined by 6%.
 - ◇ Violent Crime increased by 5%.
 - ◇ Homicides increased approximately 29%.
 - ◇ 77% of murders were committed with the use of a firearm.
 - ◇ Highest level since reporting began.

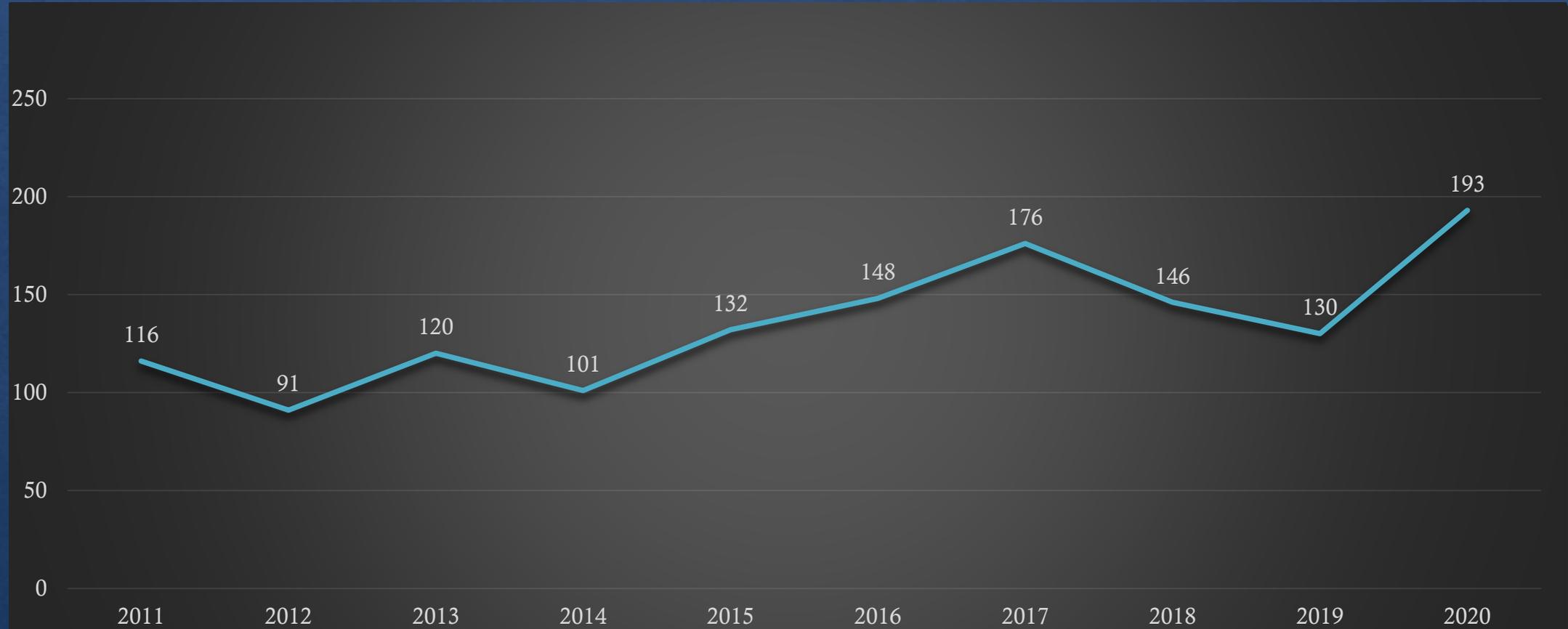


Kansas Violent Crime Data

- ◆ Kansas Incident Based Reporting System (KIBRS).
- ◆ Kansas uses same classifications of crime as the FBI.
- ◆ Violent Crime in Kansas increased 24.4% between 2019 and 2020.
- ◆ Homicides increased 48.5% over the past year.
- ◆ Aggravated Assault equaled 81% of all violent crime in Kansas.



2020 Homicides in Kansas



Kansas Violent Crime

- ◇ Operation Triple Beam
 - ◇ Two month long operation in south central Kansas.
 - ◇ Focus on violent offenders and gun violence.
 - ◇ Offenders identified through use of criminal intelligence and analysis.
 - ◇ Objective to get violent offenders off the street and reduce the number of firearm related crimes.
 - ◇ Collaborative effort with Federal, State and local law enforcement.
 - ◇ Surge Capacity



Kansas Violent Crime

- ◇ Operation Triple Beam
- ◇ Resulted in:
 - ◇ 1,072 arrests
 - ◇ 221 firearm seizures
 - ◇ 2,982 rounds of ammunition
 - ◇ 164 kilograms of illegal narcotics seized
 - ◇ Over \$200,000 in currency and six vehicles seized



Violent Crime

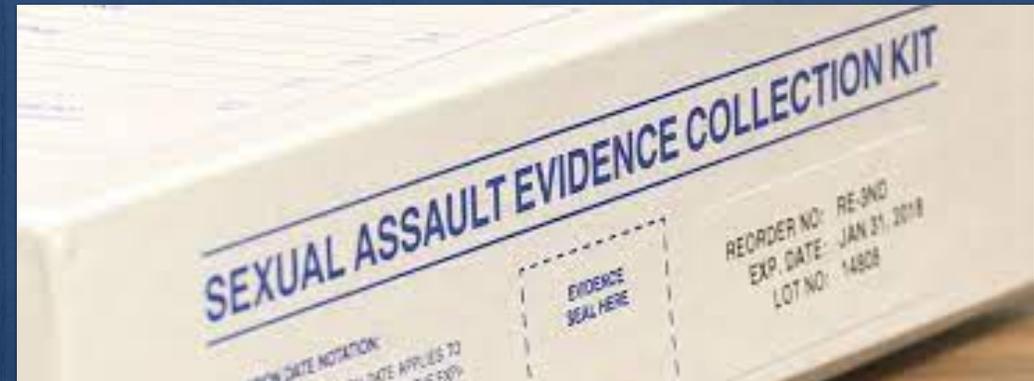
Chief Art Acevedo, Houston PD

- ◆ Discussed rise in violent crime: recommendations.
 - ◆ Improvement to universal background checks.
 - ◆ Strengthen FBI National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).
 - ◆ Prosecute those who purchase firearms for prohibited individuals.



Violent Crime – Rape

- ◆ Number of reported rapes in Kansas dropped by 8.2% last year.
- ◆ 1,190 rapes reported in Kansas last year.
- ◆ March 2021, KBI completed testing and reporting on all SAKI kits.
- ◆ Last Legislative session, KBI introduced HB 2228.



Crimes Against Children

- ◇ According to RAINN website – child protective services substantiates a claim of child sexual abuse every nine minutes.
- ◇ Child Protective Services personnel are overwhelmed and increasing caseloads.
- ◇ Child forensic interview training.
- ◇ Missed red flags of abuse.
- ◇ State Child Death Review Board (SCDRB) has recommended for several years increased collaboration between Department of Children and Family (DCF) personnel and law enforcement.
- ◇ In 2021 annual report SCDRB recommended DCF and law enforcement create a best practices approach for the investigation of allegations of abuse and neglect.

Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN), <https://www.rainn.org/about-rainn>



Crimes Against Children

KBI Focused Efforts

◆ Four Focused Areas regarding Crimes Against Children.

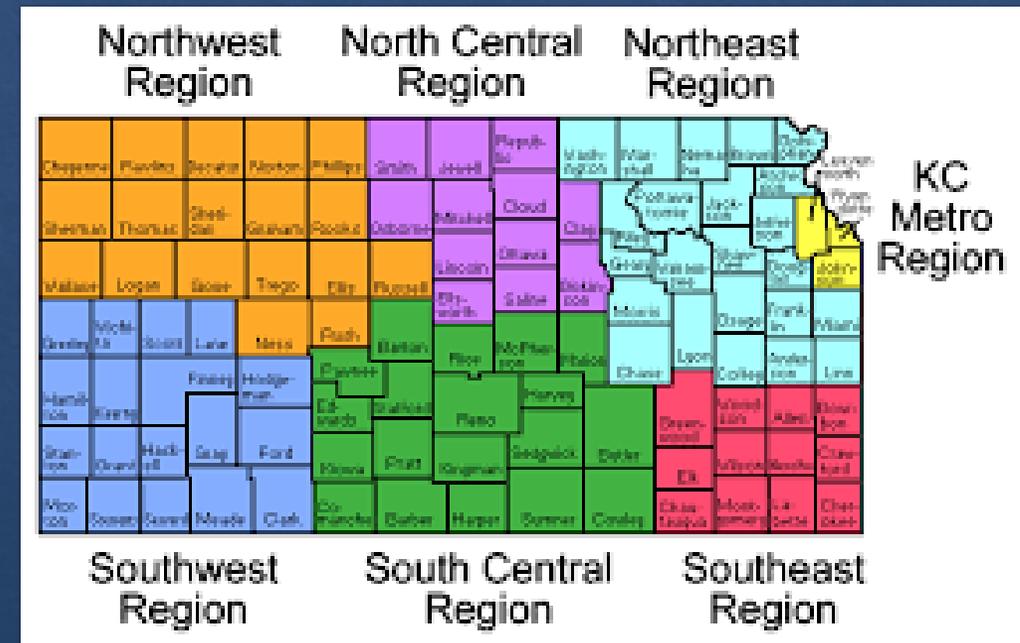
1. Northeast Child Victim's Task Force
2. Child Victim's Unit
3. Catholic Clergy Task Force
4. Major Violent Crimes and Crimes Against Children



Northeast Child Victim's Task Force

Successful undertaking and expansion.

- ◆ Established through Legislative support in FY 2018.
- ◆ 7 task force members (4 KBI, 1 KSAG Special Agent, 1 Topeka PD officer).
- ◆ 2021:
 - ◆ 42 cases
 - ◆ 9 arrests
 - ◆ 11 convictions
 - ◆ 27 forensic interviews
 - ◆ 146 search warrants served



Child Victim's Unit (CVU)

- ◆ KBI Special Agents assigned to specifically work crimes against children throughout the state.
- ◆ Specialized training.
- ◆ Number of requests from local agencies + limited resources = Jessica's Law cases only.
- ◆ Jessica's law cases (K.S.A. 21-6627) specific to crimes against children where child is under 14 years of age.
- ◆ Increased penalties = 25 years minimum sentence in most cases.



Catholic Clergy Task Force

- ◆ Established in 2019 in response to claims of sexual abuse of children within Kansas Diocese.
- ◆ Four Dioceses in Kansas:
 - ◆ Kansas City, Salina, Wichita, Dodge City.
 - ◆ Fifth organization affiliated w/ Catholic Church - Society of St. Pius X in St. Marys.
- ◆ Since inception of Task Force.
- ◆ 215 tips received.
- ◆ 122 investigations initiated.
- ◆ Reviewed almost 40,000 Diocesan records.
- ◆ Surge Capacity.



Major Violent Crimes and Crimes Against Children

- ◆ Criminal acts of abuse are falling through the cracks.
- ◆ Work collaboratively w/ DCF Child Protective Services Investigators imbedded in DCF offices.
- ◆ Quicker response and thorough investigation of child sexual and physical abuse.
- ◆ Work with local law enforcement and prosecutors offices.
- ◆ Hold perpetrators accountable and reduce the victimization of children.

2020 Legislative Enhancement



Illicit Narcotics in Kansas

- ◇ Methamphetamine, Opioids, and
 - Marijuana
- ◇ Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO's).
 - ◇ DTO – complex organizations with highly defined command and control structures that produce, transport, and/or distribute large quantities of one or more illicit drugs.
 - ◇ 770 DTO's operating in the HIDTA region in 2020.
 - ◇ Use of technology to facilitate drug shipments.



Illicit Narcotics in Kansas

- ◇ Kansas highways are corridors for the consistent trafficking of narcotics across the state.
- ◇ Trafficking of marijuana:
 - ◇ Most marijuana in the region is domestically grown from states that have decriminalized or legalized marijuana.
 - ◇ Colorado (Recreational), Missouri (Medical), and Oklahoma (Medical).
 - ◇ Black market and legally grown marijuana is affecting public safety in Kansas.
 - ◇ High level of violence with illicit marijuana trade.



Cybersecurity and Cybercrime

- ◆ Cyberattacks on state infrastructure is of considerable concern.
- ◆ Bourbon and Pottawatomie Counties.
- ◆ A criminal's ability to attack our state system from afar is a real concern to those responsible for the security of the state systems.
- ◆ Threat to Kansas Criminal Justice Information System (KCJIS).
 - ◆ Any compromise to KCJIS could be catastrophic to public safety.
- ◆ Future funding request to stand up operations and response center for cybersecurity.
 - ◆ Assist public safety organizations with threats to systems, education and training.
 - ◆ Work hand in hand with KBI Cybercrimes Unit.



Compounding Factor to Cybersecurity

- ◇ Lack of IT professionals working in state government.
- ◇ *The News and Observer, September 26, 2021*
 - ◇ “Hiring and keeping staff capable of fighting off a constant stream of cyberattacks and less severe online threats tops the list of concerns for state technology leaders.”
 - ◇ State governments cannot compete against their federal counterparts, private industry, and cybersecurity firms.
 - ◇ Consistently targeted due to high volume of personal data contained in systems.
- ◇ State must build its capacity to fight cyberattacks.

States at disadvantage in race to recruit cybersecurity pros | Raleigh News & Observer
(newsobserver.com)



Cybersecurity and Cybercrimes

- ◆ FBI's Internet Crimes Complaint Center (IC3) received almost 800,000 complaints in 2020 (69% increase since 2019).
- ◆ Many of complaints focused on fraud of federal economic relief/stimulus money and unemployment benefits to individuals and businesses.



Cybersecurity and Cybercrimes

- ◆ FY 2020 – Legislature funded creation of KBI Cyber Crimes Unit.
 - ◆ Six Special Agents, one supervisor, and one crime analyst.
 - ◆ 644 hours of advanced training.
 - ◆ Began accepting requests for assistance and working cases in October 2020.
 - ◆ Cyberattack on KS school district.
 - ◆ Threat to an elected official.
 - ◆ Diversion of \$600,000 from a Kansas business.
 - ◆ Loss of over \$250,000 from an Kansas citizen.



Civil Unrest

- ◆ Following the death of George Floyd:
 - ◆ Rising concerns over police use-of-force.
 - ◆ Demonstrations regarding those concerns.
 - ◆ National discussions and legislation over police reform.

- ◆ In 2020 Kansas Legislature established the Kansas Criminal Justice Reform Commission and the Governor established the Commission on Racial Equity and Justice.



Kansas Use-of-Force Repository

- ◇ KBI developing Kansas Use-of-Force Repository.
 - ◇ Collaborative effort with local law enforcement.
 - ◇ Developed statewide use-of-force data collection system.
 - ◇ Data collected through new KIBRS module and stored in new repository.
 - ◇ Public facing website:
 - ◇ Anonymized and Aggregate data available to public.
 - ◇ Resource for policy makers, legislators, law enforcement leadership, and researchers.
 - ◇ Completed by end of the year.
 - ◇ No additional funding request from legislature.



Intelligence

- ◇ Close collaboration between KBI and State Fusion Center.
 - ◇ KBI = criminal intelligence collection.
 - ◇ State Fusion Center = national security matters.
- ◇ Critical communication gap exists between intelligence gathering entities and local law enforcement.
 - ◇ KBI supports the creation of a 24 hour a day / 7 days a week operations center where intelligence support can be provided to federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement officials.



Property Crime and Catalytic Converters

- ◆ Property crime in Kansas 7.4% below 10-year average in 2020.
- ◆ Overall drop in theft, however increase in catalytic converter thefts.



Scrap Metal Theft Reduction Act

Scrap Metal Repository

- ◆ Designed to work with local law enforcement in the investigation of scrap metal theft
- ◆ Began on July 1, 2020.
 - ◆ Currently 104 scrap metal dealers registered (61 have reported transactions).
 - ◆ 113,000 transactions reported to repository.
 - ◆ Over 2,000,000 items of regulated scrap metal entered in repository.
 - ◆ 6,074 catalytic converters transactions reported to repository.
- ◆ KBI currently working to improve operations of Scrap Metal Repository and the transmission of scrap metal sale information to local law enforcement in effort to assist with criminal investigations and reduce scrap metal theft.



License Plate Readers (LPR's)

- ◇ KBI does not own or operate any LPR cameras and does not store or retain any LPR data.
- ◇ LPR data is beneficial in the investigation of:
 - ◇ Violent crime
 - ◇ Human trafficking
 - ◇ Drug trafficking
 - ◇ Fugitive apprehension
 - ◇ Swift resolution to Amber and Silver alerts
- ◇ Benefit to criminal investigations and exigent public safety situations when used appropriately and responsibly.



Recruitment

- ❖ Across the nation and in Kansas law enforcement agencies having difficult time recruiting personnel.
- ❖ Expectations placed on applicants are greater than in most careers.
- ❖ Recent unfortunate events have turned the spotlight on police use-of-force and police integrity causing hesitancy for those interested in pursuing a career in public service.



Recruitment

- ◆ KBI recognizes the need to build our surge capacity.
 - ◆ Need to be able to respond with resources and personnel during a critical threat to public safety.
- ◆ We cannot address capacity and diminishing resources if we cannot find a way to recruit, hire, and train qualified, ethical, and professional candidates.



Summary

- ◆ KBI has continuing significant concern for public safety in our state.
 - ◆ Increase in violent crime and gun violence.
 - ◆ Continued physical and sexual abuse of children.
 - ◆ Distribution & transportation of illicit drugs and associated violence.
 - ◆ Cyberattacks/Cybercrimes against state and local governments, businesses, & citizens.
- ◆ Continue to be concerned about the rise in hate crimes, human trafficking, outlaw motorcycle gangs and many others issues.



Thank you





Kansas Bureau of Investigation

Kirk D. Thompson
Director

Derek Schmidt
Attorney General

Before the Joint Committee on Kansas Security
Robert Jacobs, Executive Officer
Kirk Thompson, Director
Kansas Bureau of Investigation
October 13, 2021

Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the current crime trends and emerging threats impacting public safety here in the State of Kansas. As a reminder, the mission of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) is to provide professional investigative, laboratory, and criminal justice information services to Kansas criminal justice agencies for the purpose of promoting public safety and preventing crime.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) tracks information on crime occurring in the United States through several different programs. The data from these varied programs are then summarized in the annual Uniform Crime Report (UCR). The annual UCR report details crime rates and trends for seven different crimes. Those crimes are divided into violent crimes (Murder, Rape, Robbery, and Aggravated Assault) and property crimes (Burglary, Larceny/Theft, and Motor Vehicle Thefts). The FBI recently released collated UCR data from the first half of 2020. This data showed that, nationally, a violent crime occurred every 24.7 seconds and a property crime every 4.9 seconds¹.

According to an article in the New York Times, although the overall crime rate fell approximately 6% between 2019 and 2020, the number of violent crime incidents rose 5% and the number of murders in the United States rose 29% in 2020². This same article surmised that contributing factors to the rise in crime included: pandemic stresses, increased distrust between the police and the public following the death of George Floyd, and the increasing number of people carrying firearms. The article went on to note that 77% of reported murders were committed with a firearm. This is the highest percentage of murders caused by a firearm since reporting began. The number of firearm related murders has increased approximately 10% over the last ten years³.

Unfortunately, in 2020 Kansas experienced a rise in both violent crime and murder as well. Much like the FBI, the KBI also collects data regarding crimes occurring in Kansas, through the Kansas Incident Based Reporting System (KIBRS). Each year, the KBI publishes a report summarizing

¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Report, 2020, [CDE :: Home \(cloud.gov\)](#)

² New York Times, September 22, 2021, [Murder Rose by Almost 30% in 2020. It's Rising at a Slower Rate in 2021. - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

³ Ibid

the crime trends and criminal activity occurring in Kansas the previous year. In August 2021, the KBI released the 2020 Kansas Crime Index Report. The following is an analysis of the crime that occurred in Kansas in 2020 and the ensuing impact on public safety.

Violent Crime in Kansas:

As observed nationally, Kansas was not immune to the rise in violent crime. In 2020, the violent crime rate in Kansas was 24.4% higher than the previous 10 year average. There were 4.7 violent crime offenses per 1,000 people. Overall, violent crime in Kansas rose 9.3% in 2020; almost double the national increase.

The number of homicides in Kansas alone **increased 48.5%** between 2019 and 2020. This significant increase is over one and a half times the increase seen on a national level. **The number of homicides in Kansas rose from 130 to 193 between 2019 and 2020⁴.**

A majority of the increase in violent crime was due to an upsurge in aggravated assault/battery cases. Aggravated assaults/battery offenses comprised 81% of the total violent crime rate. In 2020, 11,201 aggravated assaults/battery offenses were reported.

One example of the efforts undertaken by law enforcement to address violent crime included a proactive endeavor to identify and apprehend individuals involved in violent crime. This past summer, representatives from the Wichita Police Department (WPD), Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office (SGSO), United States Marshals Service (USMS), Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI), Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP), Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC), Sedgwick County District Attorney's Office (SGDA), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), U.S. Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), United States Postal Service (USPS) and the U.S Attorney's Office came together to conduct Operation Triple Beam. Operation Triple Beam was a collaborative initiative to remove violent crime offenders from the streets and reduce the number of firearm related crime.

Operation Triple Beam targeted known violent offenders and fugitives from justice who were identified through crime analysis in an effort to reduce violent crime in the south central region of Kansas. During the two-month-long law enforcement effort, Operation Triple Beam resulted in the seizure and arrests of 1,072 individuals, 221 firearms, 2,982 rounds of ammunition, 164.82 kilograms of narcotics to include marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, and fentanyl, over \$200,000 in U.S. currency and six vehicles⁵.

Efforts like Operation Triple Beam address a substantiated concern regarding the intense volume and continued rise in violent crime across Kansas. The illegal use of weapons and gun violence is a threat to innocent victims and the public at large.

In a statement written to the Committee on Judiciary for the United States Senate this past April, Houston Chief of Police Art Acevedo, on behalf of the Major Cities Chiefs Association, discussed the rise in violent crime and gun violence. Among the suggestions Chief Acevedo stressed were the importance of sensible firearms policy, improvements to universal background checks, the

⁴ [White and Grey Minimalist Annual Report \(kansas.gov\)](https://www.kansas.gov/white-and-grey-minimalist-annual-report)

⁵ KWCH News September 29th, 2021, [Operation Triple Beam-Wichita results in more than 1,000 arrests \(kwch.com\)](https://www.kwch.com/news/operation-triple-beam-wichita-results-in-more-than-1-000-arrests)

need to strengthen the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Checks System (NICS), and the deterrent effect of prosecuting those who illegally purchase firearms for prohibited individuals⁶. Addressing these issues on both a national and state level will help reduce the unnecessary victimization of innocent citizens through gun violence.

While the number of reported rapes in Kansas is still much too high, and continued work needs to be achieved, **the number of reported rapes in Kansas continued to decline in 2020**. This past year there were 1,190 rapes reported in Kansas, which equaled an 8.2% decline from 2019. Additionally, the number of robbery crimes fell in 2020 by 7.7% as well.

The KBI continues to prioritize homicide and violent crime within the laboratory and investigation divisions. In FY 2021, the KBI Forensic Laboratory completed all testing and DNA analysis of the sexual assault kits identified and collected through the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) project.

Furthermore, this past legislative session the KBI requested new legislation (HB 2228) which amends K.S.A. 65-448 to require Kansas law enforcement agencies adopt policies regarding the submission of all sexual assault kits which are associated with a reported sexual offense to a forensic laboratory within 30 days, and requires all forensic laboratories in Kansas to examine those sexual assault kits. HB 2228 also aimed to allow for sexual assault evidence collection involving children to be completed in a more conducive setting such as a Child Advocacy Center. This proposed legislation will also increase the amount of time the KBI retains anonymous sexual assault kits from five years to 20 years. With the removal of the criminal statute of limitations for some sexual assault crimes, extending the retention of anonymous sexual assault kits provides the victim an opportunity to seek prosecution beyond the five years.

Only approximately one out of every three sexual assaults is reported to law enforcement. Ensuring that sexual assault kits are collected, submitted, and tested will help to identify serial sexual offenders in Kansas and hold suspects accountable for their actions. The provisions of HB 2228 are consistent with national best practices in regard to sexual assault evidence collection. HB 2228 passed the House of Representatives and is currently assigned to the Senate Judiciary committee. We hope to see the bill receive an early hearing in the upcoming 2022 legislative session.

Crimes Against Children:

Violent physical and sexual crimes involving children continue to plague Kansas. According to the RAINN website, every nine minutes child protective services substantiates a claim of child sexual abuse⁷. Sadly, our child protective services personnel are overwhelmed and carry daunting caseloads. Of concern are the repeated field contacts social services have with children in which a criminal act is disclosed but no referral is made to law enforcement. Although some social services personnel are trained in conducting forensic interviews with children, many are not. As a result, often times the "red flags" of abuse are missed. According to the Kansas State Child Death Review Board (SCDRB) 2021 Annual Report, the SCDRB recommends the Kansas

⁶ Constitutional and Common Sense Steps to Reduce Gun Violence, Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate, March 23, 2021, [Microsoft Word - MCCA Statement for the Record-03.23.21 Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing.docx \(majorcitieschiefs.com\)](#)

⁷ Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN), <https://www.rainn.org/about-rainn>

Department of Children and Families (DCF) and law enforcement review and adopt a best practices approach for the investigations of all allegations of abuse and neglect⁸.

According to KIBRS records there were 1,436 reports of sexual abuse or assaults against children and 3,483 reports of physical abuse to children in 2020. Crimes against children continue to be one of the four investigative priorities for the KBI. As such the KBI has engaged several focused investigative efforts in this area.

The KBI's Northeast Child Victim's Task Force (NECVTF) was established through legislative efforts in FY 2018, to specifically address crimes against children in the northeast region of the state. After establishing the task force, hiring personnel, and completing training in FY 2019, the task force began working cases in FY 2020. That year they completed 38 forensic interviews with children, 104 search warrants, and made nine arrests. In FY 2021, the NECVTF worked 38 investigations and four limited assistance requests. To date, these 42 cases include: nine arrests, 11 convictions, 27 forensic interviews with children and 146 search warrants served. The KBI hopes to expand this highly successful undertaking and operation to other parts of the state in upcoming years.

Beyond the NECVTF, KBI has agents specifically assigned to work crimes against children in both the southeast and west regions of the state. These agents, who are part of the KBI Child Victim's Unit (CVU), have specialized training in conducting forensic interviews with children. However, unfortunately, due to the number of requests for assistance and the limited capacity of the CVU, the KBI has been forced to accept only those cases that fit the definition of a Jessica's Law crime (K.S.A. 21-6627). Jessica's Law cases carry a mandatory 25 or 40 year prison sentence. In FY 2021, CVU agents worked 21 investigations and 3 limited assistance requests.

Another area of focus are crimes against children involving members of the clergy. In 2019, the Kansas Attorney General requested the KBI create a Catholic Clergy task force in response to claims of sexual abuse of children occurring within the Kansas Catholic Dioceses. There are four Catholic Dioceses in Kansas: Archdiocese of Kansas City, Wichita Diocese, Salina Diocese, and the Dodge City Diocese. Additionally, a group known as the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX), who are affiliated with the Catholic Church, and located in St. Marys, Kansas, are under investigation. Approximately seven Special Agents serve on the Catholic Clergy task force. To date the task force has received 215 tips through the telephone tip line or the Catholic Clergy Task Force e-mail address established by the KBI. Through the evaluation of those tips, as well as other information, **the task force has initiated 122 investigations and examined 39,610 pages of Diocesan records.**

Once again, the physical and sexual abuse of children is a violent crime that affects a vulnerable population. Our social services system is overwhelmed and understaffed. Criminal acts that need to be investigated are falling through cracks in the system. To address this gap the KBI requested additional funding to expand the capacity of our investigations division during the 2020 Legislative session. The additional personnel would be utilized to support a proposed collaborative endeavor between the KBI and the Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF) to help identify those children experiencing physical and sexual abuse in Kansas and thoroughly investigate those incidents.

⁸ State Child Death Review Board 2021 Annual Report, p. 68, [2021-scdrb-annual-report.pdf \(ks.gov\)](https://www.scdrb.org/2021-scdrb-annual-report.pdf)

Although this funding request was not approved for FY 2021, the KBI remains committed to working together with DCF in an effort to help screen referrals to DCF that may be criminal in nature. Special Agents working alongside DCF investigators will evaluate the need for law enforcement intervention and work with local law enforcement personnel and the prosecutor's offices in the thorough investigation and prosecution of child physical and sexual abuse cases. This strategic proposal is focused on improved investigation and cooperation related to child abuse in Kansas and is supported by both KBI Director Kirk Thompson and DCF Secretary Laura Howard.

We believe a cooperative effort with DCF will improve the response and thorough investigation of allegations of sexual and physical abuse. This quickened intervention will decrease the number of cases that are missed and ultimately reduce the exposure of a child to ongoing sexual and physical abuse by a perpetrator.

Drug Crimes in Kansas:

Illicit drugs and the trafficking of narcotics within the state continues to be a threat to public safety. Narcotics have a direct association with both violent and property crimes. Supply and demand of narcotics is often fueled by criminal activity. Unfortunately, the production, transportation and transaction of illegal drugs often involve violence, which at times affect innocent people. Furthermore, those involved in the use of illegal narcotics often turn to theft to perpetuate and pay for their drug use, once again harming innocent people. This cycle of crime has been and continues to be a hazard to our Kansas communities.

According to the 2021 Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) report, marijuana, methamphetamine, and opioids are the most widely available and widely used drugs in the Midwest region⁹. Although HIDTA represents Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota and North Dakota, this data represents existing threats in Kansas and threats passing through the state of Kansas every day.

In 2020, Midwest HIDTA identified 770 Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO) operating in the HIDTA region. This represents a 21% increase in DTO's from 2019. Drug trafficking organizations are complex organizations with highly defined command-and-control structures that produce, transport, and/or distribute large quantities of one or more illicit drugs¹⁰. DTO's use technology such as encrypted messaging applications, social media, portable GPS devices, and the dark web to facilitate communication, obtain payment, and monitor the transportation and location of drug shipments to facilitate their business.

Kansas has several major highways that are considered corridors for drug trafficking. Interstates, 35, 135, 70, all pass through Kansas and Interstate 29 is located just east of the Kansas-Missouri state line. These interstates allow for the transportation of illicit drugs and drug proceeds, including bulk cash, to larger market areas across the country. Interstate 35 (I-35) traverses through Wichita and Salina as it bifurcates Kansas and is a direct conduit to Mexico¹¹. Interstate

⁹ 2021 Midwest HIDTA Threat Assessment, June 2021, p. 4

¹⁰ [\(U\) Drug Trafficking Organizations - National Drug Threat Assessment 2010 \(UNCLASSIFIED\) \(justice.gov\)](#)

¹¹ Ibid, p. 7

70 (I-70) in Kansas is a direct path between Colorado and Missouri and connects to larger cities and hubs throughout the United States.

The trafficking of marijuana within Kansas remains a significant threat to our security. Previously, much of the marijuana seen within Kansas was imported from Mexico, however the majority of marijuana within the region today is coming from sources inside the United States. Domestically produced marijuana grown in states that have decriminalized and/or legalized marijuana typically have a higher tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content than Mexican marijuana. This region is also seeing an influx of THC cartridges that are designed to be vaporized in electronic cigarettes and vape pens¹².

With Colorado's recreational use marijuana laws and Oklahoma and Missouri both passing legislation legalizing medical marijuana within the past three years, **Kansas has become a route of travel for those transporting both black market and legally grown marijuana. Additionally, Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives in Kansas City and Omaha reported a high level of violence surrounding the illicit marijuana trade in 2020¹³.** Methamphetamine, synthetic opioids, and marijuana continue to be the top three drug threats with nexus to property and violent crime¹⁴.

The KBI Special Operations Division (SOD) conducts proactive criminal investigative and crime intelligence services in an ever-changing environment. With limited resources, the SOD has prioritized its efforts in identifying and targeting the most serious violent criminal offenders and organized criminal enterprises who pose the greatest threat to Kansas citizens.

In FY 2021, the KBI Special Operations Division (SOD) opened approximately 200 narcotics related investigations. During this time, KBI SOD Special Agents seized approximately three grams of heroin, 870 grams of cocaine, 60,413 grams of methamphetamine, and 131,069 grams of marijuana. This of course only represents a fraction of the drug and interdiction cases being worked by law enforcement across the state.

Like the KBI's need to build its investigative capacity for crimes against children, SOD also needs to build its investigative and intelligence capacity to better address violent DTO's who are transporting illicit narcotics on our highways and in to our communities.

Cybersecurity and Cyber Crimes:

One of the most significant concerns is the threat of cyberattacks to state and local infrastructure and cybercrimes committed against the public. Cybersecurity threats are real and are increasing in frequency and impact to the state. Two recent cases worth noting were the compromise to the Bourbon County Sheriff's Office's e-mail system and the ransomware attack on the Pottawatomie County government systems. The criminal's ability to attack our state and local systems is a significant concern to those responsible for the security of state systems.

The KBI is concerned about threats to state critical infrastructure such as the Kansas Criminal Justice Information System (KCJIS) and its substantive components. These systems are core functions of public safety that allow officers and first responders to respond in a safe and timely

¹² Ibid p. 20

¹³ Ibid p. 20

¹⁴ Ibid p. 9

manner to emergencies affecting the public. Any compromise of these systems could be catastrophic to public safety. Police departments, sheriff's offices, fire departments, emergency medical services (EMS), district courts, county and district attorney offices, probation and parole, corrections and prison operations, community corrections, state hospitals, forensic laboratories, and the state fusion center all utilize the KCJIS network.

One facet of the KBI strategic plan, and a future funding request, is to stand up a security operations and response center for cybersecurity. This center would be staffed with personnel trained in cybersecurity and mitigation response. The purpose of this operation and response center is to assist public safety organizations with threats to their computer systems while working hand in hand with the KBI's Cyber Crime Unit to provide a timely and professional investigative response to the cyberattack. Because it is difficult to quantify the value of prevention and deterrence to cyberattacks, this center would also provide prevention education and training to local and state public safety entities while maintaining an ability to respond with personnel when a cyberattack occurs.

A compounding factor to this threat is the shortage of qualified and trained information technology professionals working in state government. According to an article in *The News and Observer* written September 26, 2021, "Hiring and keeping staff capable of fighting off a constant stream of cyberattacks and less severe online threats tops the list of concerns for state technology leaders. There is a severe shortage of those professionals and not enough financial firepower to compete with federal counterparts, global brands and cybersecurity firms"¹⁵. The article pointed out that state governments are regular targets for cybercriminals who are drawn by the high volume of personal data contained within agencies and computer networks that are patrolling highways, maintaining election systems, and other key state services¹⁶.

The state must build and fund the capacity to fight cyberattacks and secure our states' infrastructure through effective cybersecurity planning and programs. Addressing the need for recruitment and retention of qualified and trained IT professionals is essential and should be the first step.

It is important to remember that while we have been discussing cybersecurity and the need for IT personnel, these acts are criminal in nature. This problem goes beyond state government, as we observed in both Bourbon and Pottawatomie counties. A cyberattack that intends to steal, hold hostage, or destroy intellectual property is a crime. Cybercrime victimization is widespread and can be seen in every demographic from vulnerable populations to state and federal governments.

The FBI's Internet Crimes Complaint Center (IC3) received a record number of complaints in 2020. Nationwide, **IC3 received almost 800,000 complaints with reported losses that exceeded four billion dollars. This was a 69% increase in complaints from 2019.** Many of the fraud complaints this past year centered on individuals exploiting the pandemic; targeting the economic relief and stimulus money given to families, CARES Act funding provided to businesses, and unemployment payments to those who lost their jobs due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁷.

¹⁵ [States at disadvantage in race to recruit cybersecurity pros | Raleigh News & Observer \(newsobserver.com\)](https://www.newsobserver.com)

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ [2020_IC3Report.pdf](#)

As you may recall, in FY 2020 the Kansas legislature provided funding to the KBI to create a Cyber Crime Unit (CCU). The mission of the CCU is to provide expert, professional, and timely assistance to law enforcement in the investigation of serious crimes where the internet, cyber tools, networks, computer software and devices were used to facilitate the crimes. Since its creation, the CCU (which includes six special agents, one supervisor and one crime analyst) has completed 644 hours of cyber related advanced training. Two of the six special agents serve on federal cybercrimes task forces. In October 2020, the CCU began accepting cyber related investigations. Some examples of cases worked by the KBI CCU include cybercrimes related to a cyberattack on a Kansas school district, a threat to an elected official, the diversion of over \$600,000 from a Kansas business, and the theft of over \$250,000 from an elderly individual to name just a few.

In the last year the CCU has also reviewed 291 IC3 complaints, 53 suspected business e-mail compromises, five computer intrusions, 12 denials of service, eight malware incidents, 22 ransomware attacks, and 155 phishing attempts in Kansas. The CCU works cooperatively with federal, state, and local authorities to identify, investigate, and prosecute cybercriminals.

As we consider the importance of keeping our state's critical infrastructure and criminal justice systems secure, we must not forget that these are criminal acts we are attempting to prevent. Whether cybercriminals are successful or not, a professional, comprehensive and timely investigation must be completed to hold those responsible accountable, build deterrence and bring resolution to the victims. Finally, it is essential that we educate Kansas businesses and the public on cybercrime deterrence and the importance of reporting these incidence to law enforcement.

Civil Unrest:

Following the death of George Floyd in Minnesota, there were rising concerns over police use-of-force and debate over equity within segments of the criminal justice system. Demonstrations were held across the nation regarding these concerns. Over the last year there have been national discussions and legislation regarding police reform. In 2020, both the Kansas Criminal Justice Reform Commission and the Governor's Commission on Racial Equity and Justice were established to examine and address discrepancies within our criminal justice system.

Noting the growing conversations and calls to action from around the country and the importance of transparency in today's policing environment, the KBI, in consultation and support of the Kansas Attorney General, began developing the Kansas Use-of-Force Repository (KUFR) in the fall of 2020. Over the past year the KBI has worked collaboratively with internal and external law enforcement stakeholders to build a functional data collection system that will provide valuable information regarding police use-of-force incidents in Kansas.

In January 2022, the KBI will begin collecting information on all use-of-force incidents by law enforcement officers and against law enforcement officers. Law enforcement agencies in Kansas will be asked to voluntarily submit use-of-force data to the KBI through the first updated module of the KIBRS system. The data will be stored in a newly created Use-of-Force Repository. Additionally, a public facing website will be designed to allow the public, policy makers, legislators, and researchers access to anonymized aggregate data on use-of-force incidents occurring in Kansas.

Without proper data, it is impossible to understand and formulate a strategy to address incidents where excessive use-of-force may have occurred, or to make informed decisions regarding

training, policy, and best practices. A proactive analysis will help us understand how and when Kansas law enforcement officers use force.

Emerging threats, as identified by the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice include: terrorism, gangs, drugs, active shooters, transnational organized crime, and cybercriminals. The need to enhance intelligence gathering, analysis, and reporting in Kansas is evident. The KBI SOD is the proactive investigative and intelligence gathering arm of the agency. The SOD is dedicated to enhancing public safety in Kansas by providing professional proactive investigative, technical, tactical, and criminal intelligence services to the Kansas criminal justice community. The KBI intends to seek an agency enhancement to stand up a 24 hours a day, seven days a week operation center for criminal intelligence. Today's threats require partnerships across all levels of government and the private sector.

A close collaboration exists between the KBI, who has responsibility for the collection of general criminal intelligence, and the state fusion center whose focus is on national security matters. A critical gap occurs in the continuity of communication between intelligence gathering entities and local law enforcement. The KBI recognizes the need to enhance its criminal intelligence and information sharing capacity. To fill this gap, the KBI supports the creation of a 24 hour a day, 7 days a week watch center where tactical intelligence support can be provided to all federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement officials throughout Kansas.

Property Crime and Catalytic Converter Thefts:

Although property crimes in Kansas were 7.4% below the 10 year average and 1.2% lower in 2020 than in 2019, certain types of property crime have increased. Property crimes are defined as Burglary, Larceny/Theft, Motor Vehicle Theft and Arson.

Property crime victimizes individuals beyond measure. A person will often feel violated and vulnerable from being the victim of theft whether that is physical property or identity theft. However, property crime has changed over the past two years. Residential burglary, which was often considered the preferred method for accessing and stealing someone's property has given way to motor vehicle theft. It is speculated that, due to more people remaining at home in 2020 because of the COVI-19 pandemic, the number of residential burglaries declined. As a result, motor vehicle thefts began to rise and some practitioners believe that motor vehicle theft has now become the preferred crime of opportunity.

Even though Kansas observed an overall drop in theft, one specific area that has seen an influx of attention is stolen catalytic converters. Catalytic converters contain precious metals such as platinum, palladium, and rhodium that are a commodity to scrap metal dealers. Catalytic converters are easily cut away from the underside of a vehicle and are expensive to replace by the vehicle owner. Some businesses in Kansas have been victimized by catalytic converter thefts from multiple company owned (fleet) vehicles during a single incident. Unfortunately, catalytic converters do not contain serial numbers or any unique identifiers, which complicates law enforcement efforts to investigate catalytic converter thefts.

In 2019, the Kansas legislature passed the Scrap Metal Theft Reduction Act, which required all scrap metal dealers to report regulated scrap metal transactions to a new scrap metal reporting system through the KBI. The reporting system was designed to aid Kansas law enforcement in

the tracking and investigation of scrap metal thefts. The scrap metal reporting system began on July 1, 2020.

As of October 6, 2021, there were 104 scrap metal dealers currently registered with the system, 61 of which have reported transactions to the KBI. **Currently there have been 113,000 transactions and over 2,000,000 items of regulated scrap metal entered in to the repository.**

Any law enforcement officer with access to the Kansas Criminal Justice Information System (KCJIS) can access and search the repository to assist with scrap metal theft investigations. To date, there have been 2,068 law enforcement searches of the scrap metal repository. The KBI is currently working to improve the operation of the scrap metal repository and the transmission of scrap metal sale information, to include catalytic converters, to local law enforcement in an effort to assist with criminal investigations and reduce scrap metal theft.

License Plate Readers:

Upon the request of the committee, the KBI would like to offer a few comments on the use of License Plate Reader (LPR) devices and data. The KBI has not deployed any license plate reader cameras and does not own or maintain any LPR data. Several companies manufacture LPR cameras and have proprietary software that secures and maintain their LPR data. However, the KBI would be remiss if we did not state that LPR data is a beneficial investigative tool. **LPR data is used to assist with the investigation of violent crime, human trafficking, drug trafficking, fugitive apprehension, and the swift resolution of Amber alerts and Silver alerts.**

In 2020, the KBI requested LPR data to locate a father who was suspected to have murdered his two sons and fled with his two daughters. In 2021, during an Amber Alert activation, LPR data was utilized to assist in the safe recovery of the juvenile and, in 2019, LPR data was requested to monitor the travel activity of suspected drug traffickers moving narcotics from Mexico to Kansas.

LPR data has been shown to benefit criminal investigations and assist with exigent public safety situations when used appropriately and responsibly.

Recruitment:

One final impediment to maintaining public safety is the difficulty with recruiting and hiring law enforcement officers and civilian law enforcement employees. Law enforcement agencies across the nation and in Kansas have struggled in recent years to find, recruit, and hire personnel. The expectations placed on a law enforcement applicant are greater than many other positions. An applicant's character, background, financial history, education, social media activity, ethics, and integrity are all thoroughly scrutinized before he or she is even offered a position.

Recent unfortunate events have turned the spotlight on police use-of-force, police integrity, and the criminal justice system in general and have created a hesitancy to those who might be interested in pursuing a career in public service. Law enforcement officers are expected to make ethical, legal, and unbiased decisions in their job and must always work to maintain and build the trust society has bestowed on them. **However, we cannot address capacity and diminishing resources if we cannot first find a way to recruit, hire, and train qualified, ethical, and professional candidates.** The KBI recognizes the need to build our surge capacity. Our ability

to send multiple agents and analysts to a critical event that jeopardizes public safety is imperative. This is consistent with our agency's mission and expected of us from our law enforcement partners.

The KBI hopes the legislature will support law enforcement in their efforts to find a recruitment and retention solution.

Summary:

In summary, we assess a continuing significant concern for public safety in our state. The increases in violent crime and gun violence this past year are troubling. The continued physical and sexual victimization of children is abhorrent and not getting any better. The distribution and transportation of illicit drugs and the associated violent and property crime remain a threat. Cyberattacks and cyber criminals persist in their victimization of state and local governments, businesses and individual Kansans. In and around the state, thefts of catalytic converters are disconcerting and continue to rise. We continue to be concerned about a rise in hate crimes, human trafficking, outlaw motorcycle gangs, and many other issues.

In the midst of all of these threats to public safety, law enforcement agencies around the state are fighting recruitment and retention issues. There is a need to build investigative and law enforcement capacity throughout the state, but to do so we must be able to identify and successfully recruit candidates that can meet the elevated expectations of our industry and our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

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