



**Kansas Association of
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**Testimony to the Joint Committee on Pensions and Benefits
Help Needed: Addressing the Current Law Enforcement Hiring and Retention Gaps
Expanding DROP to All KP&F Agencies
December 8, 2021**

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chairman Longbine and Committee Members:

Many of our Kansas law enforcement agencies are struggling to recruit and retain officers. While this isn't entirely a new challenge, the problem has grown substantially over the past couple of years with the increased national anti-police rhetoric.

DROP: Allow Local KP&F Agencies the Option of Using DROP

Ironically, the DROP program in Kansas was approved for the KHP to help address their recruiting problems. Then it was expanded to the KBI to help with their recruiting problems. But making this tool available to local Kansas law enforcement agencies has not been granted creating an uneven playing field for local agencies.

We believe DROP has been in place long enough to evaluate the impact on the KPERS system, which we believe to be minimal. Every officer who extends their employment by utilizing DROP means one less position we have to fill. Unfortunately, vacancies are felt most at the entry level positions meaning our uniformed call-answering officers.

In a recent survey of our association member agencies who are in KP&F:

- 46% of agencies report it has been 24 or more months since being fully staffed.
- The average time of all agencies since they have been fully staffed is 33 months.
- 67% of agencies have vacancies to fill.
- 17% of officers will be eligible to retire in the next 5 years.
- A majority of respondents believe having DROP will reduce vacancies in their agencies.

We are asking for your support of expanding the DROP option to all local agencies under KP&F.

JAIL STAFF: Allowing Local Option to Place Local Corrections Officers into KP&F if Deputies are Currently in KP&F

For the sheriffs, staffing in the jails has also become an area of great concern. Our jail staff cannot currently be in KP&F and are in regular KPERS instead. This means they must work until a much higher age before they can retire, particularly if they are in Tier 3 KPERS. Nearly every sheriff whose agency is under KP&F believes allowing the local detention officers to be in KP&F would reduce their vacancies in jail staff.

We are asking for your support of HB2198 which would allow a local option to move local corrections officers into KP&F, if the Deputies in that county are in KP&F.

Sheriff Jeff Easter, Sedgwick County