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**Testimony to the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
In Support of SB138
February 23, 2021**

Chairman Hilderbrand and Honorable Members of the Committee:

My name is David Groves and in addition to serving as Sheriff of Cherokee County, I also have the honor of currently serving as the First Vice-President of the Kansas Sheriffs' Association.

Kansans in each of our communities suffer from mental health crises, which is a concern most any law enforcement professional will tell you has increased in recent years. Unfortunately, despite their best efforts, mental health professionals and community mental health clinics have been unable to keep up with the demand from our citizens.

Exacerbating the issue, especially in communities such as mine which border both Missouri and Oklahoma, is the ability for clinicians who are hired and trained here to cross over the state line once they gain a little experience and make a considerable amount more money, in some cases \$10,000.00 - \$15,000.00 per year.

That is just one reason I, and the Kansas Sheriffs' Association, submit testimony today as a proponent of SB138.

The ability for certified community behavioral health clinics to be competitive when it comes to recruiting and retaining staff opens up doors for mental health professionals to provide more services throughout the community, including more availability to provide services to those incarcerated in our county jails.

In addition, the passage of SB138 would not only allow our veterans and current armed forces members to receive specialized services close to home without traveling several hours across the state, but it would also enable mental health professionals the ability to respond to scenes where a resident is experiencing a crisis.

This coordinated response from law enforcement and mental health professionals will allow for a more appropriate response which will best serve the person in crisis.

Again, the Kansas Sheriffs' Association believes the passage of this bill will provide important services to those in our community who need it the most, when they need it the most.

We thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

David Groves, Cherokee County Sheriff
Vice President, Kansas Sheriffs' Association