



Southeast Kansas Library System
Sharon Moreland, Director

January 30, 2024

Senate Local Government Committee

Sen. Tim Shallenburger

Tim.Shallenburger@senate.ks.gov

RE: HB 2176: Arkansas City and Udall area library districts

Dear Senator,

My name is Sharon Moreland and I succeeded Roger Carswell as the System Librarian for the Southeast Kansas Library System (SEKLS) after his retirement in 2021. In 2002, during Roger's tenure, HB 2781 established an expanded taxing district for the Independence Public Library (IPL) that eliminated rural tax support to the regional library system immediately, rather than over a two-year period to allow for budgetary adjustments. That immediate reduction in system support, coupled with the end of LAVTR funding, negatively impacted the System's ability to extend library services to its members. Reduced allocation funding from SEKLS to IPL was but one consequence. HB 2176 proposes the same, with the same detrimental effects for the South Central Kansas Library System.

The precedent set by IPL opened the door to using special legislation to expand taxing districts while reducing the System's funding. What would it mean for the future of our unique and well-established regional library systems if all of the 300 or more public libraries in Kansas were to follow suit? Using special legislation such as this to expand taxing districts does manifest harm to the regional library systems and our member libraries. Every system is different, but we all provide our libraries supplemental funding, professional consulting services, and opportunities for extended services and economies of scale.

I urge you to vote no on this bill and instead support an increase in State Library grant-in-aid to all public libraries statewide.

Sincerely,

Sharon Moreland