

CALVIN H. HAYDEN
SHERIFF



DOUGLAS G. BEDFORD
UNDERSHERIFF

DUTY HONOR SERVICE

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Testimony to the House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice in Support of HB2625
March 1, 2018

Chairman Jennings and Committee Members,

The Johnson County Sheriff's Office supports HB2625 relating to establishing confidentiality of records contained in the central registry of all Kansas police officers and law enforcement officers.

We support the intent of this bill. Officers who are terminated for cause should be known, not only to other law enforcement agencies, but to the public as well. We realize we are held to a higher standard as our positions are ones of public trust. Any officer who willfully violates that public trust to the extent that he or she is decertified should be exposed to the public for the sake of public safety and transparency of government.

We are concerned, however, with the language on page two, lines 20 – 31. The bill states that "any" record would be released to any person in this section. It is too broad in nature for what we believe is the intent of the bill – to prevent those who chose to betray their oath of office from ever holding a position in law enforcement again. Not all law enforcement officers who are decertified lose their certification for a wrongful act on their part.

It is these types of personnel actions that we believe the public should not have access to. For example, if an officer incurs a debilitating medical condition in the line of duty, or off duty for that matter, they could lose their certification, either temporarily or permanently, depending on the circumstances. This bill, as currently written, would release medical files to the public since those records would be submitted during a hearing. The bill also releases the transcript of the hearing and would again provide personal medical information to the public that they have no need or right to know. We believe this bill could deter officers from reporting medical conditions to their employers.

We would ask, should the bill be worked, that language be added to clarify that law enforcement officers who are decertified for medical issues are not

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included in the public release of records. This amendment would protect the privacy of the officer involved.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our concerns. Please amend HB2625 when the bill is worked.

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