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To: Senator Rick Welborn, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Susan Duffy, General Manager
Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority

Date: February 1, 2017

Re: SB 41 Support Testimony

I am pleased to offer this testimony in support of SB 41.

As general manager of Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority for the past four years, I have learned the important place that public transportation occupies in our communities and the critical role it plays in society's infrastructure.

Public transportation carries people, by the dozens and hundreds, to and from work, to medical appointments, shopping, and a multitude of activities basic to the vitality of any community. People gather in transportation hubs and cluster into buses and trolley cars, entrusting their personal safety to public transit.

When a passenger assaults a transit operator while the operator is driving a vehicle, other passengers, along with other drivers and pedestrians in the vicinity, are placed at risk.

Transit workers are at higher risk for violence than other workers. They work with the public in a mobile workplace, delivering passengers to every corner of the community, handling money, and often working alone.

Even one serious incident of violence can make media headlines and diminish the perception of security, especially if the crime is against the transit operator.