

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman William Mason at 2:00 p.m. on March 8, 2004 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:
Representative Ray Cox- excused

Committee staff present:
Russell Mills, Legislative Research Department
Mary Torrence, Revisor of Statutes Office
Dennis Hodgins, Legislative Research Department
Rose Marie Glatt, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

PROPONENT

Senator Hensley
Jim Gilchrist, Director, Topeka Public Schools
Gary Herman, Major, Topeka Police Department
Dr. Linda Wiley, Associate Principal, Topeka High School
Officer Kala Loomis, Topeka Public School Police Department
Anthony Woollen, National Association School Resources Office

OPPONENTS

(See page 2- Attachment 6)

Others attending:
See Attached List.

Without objections Representative Vickrey introduced a bill concerning the Kansas open records act; relating to records not required to be open.

SB 136 - Jurisdictions of persons employed as police officers by community colleges and school districts

Mr. Mills explained that the bill changes the term university campus police officers to university police officers and broadens the definition. There is no fiscal effect.

Senator Hensley, reviewed his teaching history, stating that his expertise was working with the emotionally disturbed children and youth. Currently he works in a lock-down (secured) area of the school with 16-20 juvenile offenders. He cited reasons for increased violence involving juvenile offenders in our society. Many students exhibit an absolute disregard for authority in the school environment. Over time he had become increasingly grateful to the people that work in the security division of the school district. He spoke of two officers (police), hired to provide security for their building.

SB 136 attempts to finally give recognition to those individual who work for school districts and for other education institutions the full status of being a law enforcement officer. It brings them under the current statute as applies to state, county and city law enforcement officers, and that is crimes against a law enforcement officer, particularly a crime of aggravated assault.

He urged the Committee to favorably consider **SB 136** and spoke of a balloon amendment that would clearly delineate the difference between school officers and university police (Attachment 1).

Discussion followed regarding other benefits to the bill and liability to the school district.

Jim Gilchrist, Director, Department of Safety for the Topeka Public Schools, stated that the bill was proposed to put to rest controversy that had arisen over the years regarding their position in the law enforcement community (Attachment 2). It would mandate that all school police officers in Kansas meet the same high standards required by the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center and the public safety

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE at 1:30 p.m. on March 8, 2004 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

profession.

He answered questions regarding how the program “*No child left behind*” had affected the responsibilities of law enforcement officers; use of city police officers as school resource officers; hours of protection in schools; truancy rate in schools; success of educating juvenile offenders; and the requirements for transporting juveniles.

Major Gary Herman, Topeka Police Department, testified on behalf of Chief Ed Klumpp. **SB 136** would positively impact the City of Topeka as it would allow USD 501 Security to handle more incidents without direct assistance from Topeka Police Department officers ([Attachment 3](#)). With ever increasing requests for service in the City of Topeka, any help in reducing requests for assistance from other qualified law enforcement agencies, such as USD 501 Security, would help in their overall delivery of services to the Topeka community. Discussion followed regarding mandatory reporting procedures.

Dr. Linda Wiley, Associate Principal, Topeka High School, rose in support of **SB 136** ([Attachment 4](#)). She stated that the bill would provide for the necessary and up-to-date levels of jurisdiction and protection of our K-12 school police officers. The antiquated statute (written in 1974) leave school police officers too often in harm’s way, both in legal and physical terms.

Discussion followed regarding what other states are doing to address this issue and expansion of jurisdiction off the school property grounds

Officer Kala Loomis, Topeka Public School Police Department, answered questions pertaining to the bill.

Discussion followed regarding definitions in the law.

Anthony Woollen, National Association School Resources Office, Leawood, KS testified in support of **SB 136** ([Attachment 5](#)). He was a school resource officer in Blue Valley for five years before accepting the position of a Juvenile Detective in Leawood, KS. He testified on behalf of the National Association of School Resources, stating that the role of the School District Officer has changed dramatically, and those who complete the Kansas Law Enforcement Academy are actively involved in investigations, patrol procedures, courtroom testimony and arrests of violent and non-violent offenders and should be recognized appropriately.

Officer Loomis submitted a balloon amendment to allow police officers from different educational institutes to keep their current titles.

The hearing was closed on **SB 136**.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. The next meeting is March 9, 2004.

*One letter of written testimony was received April 2, and undersigned by the following: Chris Hoover, Emporia State University, Ronnie Grice, Kansas State University, Ralph Oliver, University of Kansas, Sid Carlile, Fort Hays State University, Richard L. Johnson, University of Kansas Medical Center, Darrell Masoner, Pittsburg State University, Charles Rummery, Wichita State University ([Attachment 6](#))