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**Testimony to the House Federal and State Affairs Committee
In Support of HB2415
March 12, 2021**

Chairman Barker and Committee Members,

Our testimony is based on section 1 of HB2415. Section 2 is not within our scope of interest and we present no opinion on section 2.

Our Associations appreciate clarifying the legal authority of law enforcement jurisdiction of the Fire Marshal investigators who are state certified law enforcement officers under the Law Enforcement Training Act. We support the amendment proposed in the Fire Marshal's testimony amending section 1, subsection (a). With consistent statewide standards for law enforcement certification and training Kansas has had in place for many years now, these investigators who are certified law enforcement officers should have the legal authority to handle any criminal activity during the routine performance of their Fire Marshal duties.

We also support the proposed amendments clarifying the manner of investigating deaths occurring at fire scenes. These provisions found in Section 1, subsection (b) direct those investigations to be conducted jointly by fire and law enforcement investigators. These joint investigations will combine the expertise of the fire investigators in the fire related evidence and investigations with the expertise of the law enforcement investigators where the death is found to be the result of criminal activity other than from the fire itself. The provision also assures the availability of assistance of the Fire Marshal's Office with their unique investigative expertise. These types of death investigation occur fairly regularly involving homicides where the arson is used to cover up the criminal activity and destroy evidence of the murder of other crimes committed prior to the arson. These provisions will serve to reduce legal and jurisdictional issues as the Fire Marshal investigators assist local authorities while also assuring state and local resources are engaged.

We encourage you to recommend HB2415 favorably for passage.

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