



March 10, 2023

To: Kansas House of Representatives Commerce Committee

RE: Opposition to HB 2447

Honorable Members of the Kansas House of Representatives Commerce Committee:

We write to express opposition to House Bill 2447, regarding local government's abilities to regulate business and industry within our own jurisdictions.

As you may know, your predecessors and colleagues passed a Home Rule statute in 1961. Home Rule was established by the will of the citizens because they decided that they primarily prefer their local governments, rather than the state, to make decisions for their communities.

HB 2447 will strip local governments from the ability to regulate business and industry, and takes away our ability to exercise our right to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare.

Our local elected officials (in Newton's case, City Commissioners) were elected by the citizens of the community with the charge of making decisions that are specific to Newton. We pride ourselves on transparency and ethics in our daily business and the ordinances and regulations that we adopt. Local governments are the "most accessible" since any citizen can walk into the doors of City Hall or the County Courthouse, or pick up the phone and call us and reach the official or staff member that they need to help with their problem, situation, or answer their questions.

We respectfully ask that HB 2447 not move forward out of committee. It is very broad and sweeping and will have many unforeseen and unintended consequences. What happens if a community does not have a licensing process? What are the inferences to City Code or Zoning Code regulations? If there is a specific industry or service that feels they are being discriminated against in our state we encourage them to come forward and deal directly with the legislature, law, ordinance, or local government that they feel is being prohibitive toward them.

We would be happy to provide additional comments as needed or requested and thank you for your time in receiving our stance on this matter.

Sincerely,

Leroy Koehn, Mayor

Kelly McElroy, City Manager

cc: Chris Towle, City Attorney  
Denise Duerksen, City Clerk  
Craig Dunlavy, Chief of Police  
Steve Roberson, Chief of Fire/EMS