



Jim Howell
Chair Pro Tem

Commissioner – Fifth District
Board of County Commissioners
Sedgwick County, Kansas

Date: February 13, 2023

To: Chair Hoheisel and Members of the House Committee on Financial Institutions and Pensions

From: Commissioner Jim Howell, Chair Pro Tem

Subject: House Bill 2195

As Sedgwick County Commissioner, I am submitting written testimony in support of House Bill 2195. Sedgwick County is struggling to fill a recording-setting number of vacancies. These vacancies provide a critical role in responding to our community's needs.

HB 2195 would be a step in the right direction for Sedgwick County and other KPERS participants because it would grant an 18-month reprieve from the 30 percent penalty currently imposed for hiring KPERS retirees as County employees. This penalty limits the applicant pool and acts as a disincentive for the County to hire otherwise eligible public service-minded individuals. By removing this penalty, we could also see an increase in applicants from other agencies across the State of Kansas, thus helping us fill our critical vacancies.

While Sedgwick County is supportive of HB 2195, other KPERS measures would better enable the County to attract and retain talented employees. For example, a permanent removal of the retiree penalty, in lieu of the 18-month reprieve, would be more effective. Other enhancements that could strengthen KPERS 3 employee benefits would also be extremely beneficial to Sedgwick County's efforts to attract and retain talented staff.

Sedgwick County respectfully supports the passage of HB 2195 and is hopeful that this Committee will favorably consider any other enhancements to KPERS benefits.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Howell, Chair Pro Tem
Commissioner – Fifth District