

Written Testimony of **Elrea M. Mullen**  
Proponent for HB 2176

**March 13, 2023**

Dear Chairperson and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of the House Bill regarding the creation of the Arkansas City Area Library District.

I am a retired teacher who taught in Public Education Schools for 32 years. I taught students who were in Middle School Science, mostly in the Ark City Middle School. I am presently retired.

I have lived in several cities and used city libraries throughout my adult life. I have never felt more welcomed to be assisted by Librarians than I have at the Arkansas City Public Library.

Since retiring, I have done lots of volunteer work for our community and often needed to type reports, make posters and do research for various topics. I have been a member of the Ks. Association of Retired School Personnel for 17 years and within the last 6 years have been the Vice President, President and now the Historian at the state of Kansas level in Topeka for KARSF. During that 6 years I continued to need help at the city library for information regarding schools in Kansas and often with getting my reports completed and sent to state committees of this Board which is made up of former school personnel throughout Kansas. At times, I could not send the reports to some committee members due to their computer not allow them to open the documents that I sent from my home computer. I received wonderful help, many times over the last six years at the Ark City Library from the staff members as to sending these documents in a manner that other Board members could received and open them. I would have been totally unable to send those reports without the assistance of our Ark City City Librarians and assistants. They ALWAYS made me feel welcomed to go in and ask for their help with these situations. I truly had no where else to turn for that needed help. My colleague, Emporia State University professor, Mr. Bob Grover who taught students to become good librarians was extremely impressed with the assistance that our local librarians and their assistance gave me.

I have been involved in several Book Clubs lead a this Library staff member. They are extremely welcoming and helpful in ordering many copies of the books that we needed each month. Never did we lack for the needed material for our group. Several of them were the leaders of the book discussions and provided coffee and tea for us to enjoy during that meeting time.

Each of those who lead a book club were always well prepared and moved the discussions along at an appropriate rate so we could get through each meeting within the allotted time..

There is only one drawback with "our" library and that is with the very OLD building NOT having enough space for the amount of materials that we have and often problems with the amount of electricity available to helps students and adults who came into the building to use the computers or check out books. Each of the Library staff are well versed in how to assist those who came in to use those materials. Due to this shortage of space and the fact that our city has already acquired the land for building a more spacious library in the center of our city, we teachers and all adults would LOVE to get that new Library build immediately. The present situation allows for NO space for great displays such as the DERBY, Kansas library has available. Our building is so tight on space that we feel CLAUSTROPHOBIC when entering and looking through the shelves for our chosen books and materials to be checked out.

The library staff has done an excellent job of making a center for children in the basement. However, it would be so much better to have a building with space for the children and adults without going down the old, creaky steps and using the tiny old bathroom facility that is now all that is available.

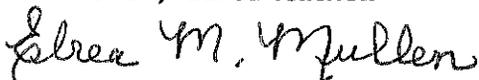
Lastly, the parking space for this library is very much limited. We have to park in the back of the building if we are there for any length of time and there is no police presence in that area. The front three spaces, on the street, are for those who are handicapped or will be there only about 15 minutes.

I fully support this bill because of all of the things above which are needed in our community . During the summer months the schools are closed and the student population only has the city library as a resource for continuing to read and do research. Many students do not have access to a computer at home during the summer and with today's society they need that constant reinforcement during all months of every year. Having been a teacher for 32 years, I fully know what it is like to get the students started again after 3 months of not reading and using the computer. Adults and children NEED a city library year around.

It is for these reasons that I support this legislation in asking that you recommend it favorably.

Respectfully,

**Elrea Mullen, retired teacher.**



**Elrea Mullen, 134 Greenway Rd., Arkansas City, Ks.67005**