

Senate Bill 86

I urge each member of this committee to approve Senate Bill 86. We must reign in government officials who act in a manner that is against the law and against the good of the residents of this state.

In Johnson County, we have a new Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, Mike Kelly. His first act after being sworn in on January 9, 2023, was to issue a decree that the public comment portion of the video of their meeting would not be part of the meeting. If you watch the video, a screen pops up when the public comments begin, but there is no sound. That means no one in Johnson County who cannot attend the meetings in person is not able to hear our comments. That discriminates against the disabled, the shut-ins, etc., from being able to participate in local government. This is a blatant violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

I asked Cynthia Dunham, one of the county attorneys for copies of the emails and letters that the BOCC received from the public, between January 12-18, and she informed me that it would cost \$125.00 (\$6,500 a year) for some, but not all, of the items I requested. According to Ms. Dunham, the county will not provide copies of certain records that might identify the individual(s) who sent them.

We have proof in the form of Form 990s filed by Climate Action KC and Mid-America Regional Council. The last Form 990 filed by Climate Action KC shows that Janee Hanzlick is the Vice-President of Climate Action KC, an organization started by Mike Kelly and a councilwoman from Shawnee created. The Form 990s filed by MARC show that Mike Kelly, Becky Fast and Janee Hazlick are all on the Board of Directors of that organization. You can see the list of all the mayors, city council members, and members of the Kansas legislature who are associated with Climate Action KC at <https://climateactionkc.com/leaders>. I would like to note that it is not clear at the present whether Mike Kelly has resigned from his position with Climate Action KC.

In addition, Mike Kelly is a partner at Husch Blackwell. Burns & McDonnell filed a lawsuit against Husch Blackwell, and an arbitration panel awarded Burns & McDonnell \$62 million after one of the partners failed to disclose a conflict of interest. Kelly appeared before the Johnson County Planning Commission in early 2021 to speak about the need for renewable energy. This was several months before the first public meeting on August 10, 2021.

There is no transparency in Johnson County government. The residents of Johnson County deserve better, but the only way for us to hold our elected and appointed officials accountable is to file a complaint with the Kansas Attorney General or file a lawsuit.

Please vote yes on Senate Bill 86.

Joyce E. Whittier