

House Committee on Local Government  
HB2160 - Written Proponent Testimony, February 4, 2025

Dear Honorable Chairman Rep. Emil Bergquist and Members of the House  
Committee on Local Government

I strongly urge your support for HB2160 Enacting the municipal employee whistleblower act to provide statutory protections for municipal employees who report or disclose unlawful or dangerous conduct.

I am for municipal employees having personal protection to report wrongdoing without retaliation.

It has been reported in the press that municipal employees have been fired for correctly reporting through management channels issues that are wrong or illegal. Commissioners tell employees that, they are the boss and they can do what they want. This is wrong and leads to distrust in local government.

I live in Douglas County in which current lawsuits (reported in local press) are being conducted against the Douglas County Commission over a planned solar farm. The complaint alleges that a Douglas County commissioner sought favors in connection with a proposed 600-acre solar farm project. That lawsuit has been filed by Grant Township, the North Lawrence Improvement Association and more than 20 other businesses and individuals in the area. Currently, an injunction prohibits land alterations for the proposed solar farm as the suit continues. However, it would never have gotten to this point if SB 120 was state law and municipal employees felt safe in reporting issues.

Many people have lost trust in county government. Our Douglas County property taxes have climbed 4.7 times inflation plus population growth in the last 25 years (504% increase). When we observe conflict of interest in spending patterns we inevitably suspect malfeasance. Please help municipal employees feel safe in reporting problems.

HB 2160 is a step in the right direction to hold local government officials accountable.

Please get HB 2160 moving forward and on schedule. I appreciate your support for HB2160.

Sincerely,  
John Ims  
Senate District # 1  
Douglas County  
Lawrence, KS, 66049

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