



Kansas State Lodge

Fraternal Order of Police

Testimony to the
Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Insurance
Senate Bill 225
Mik Shanks, President
Kansas State Fraternal Order of Police
February 23, 2021

Chairman Longbine and members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing my written testimony in complete support of Senate Bill 225. My name is Mik Shanks and I am the President of the Kansas State Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police. On behalf of all 3,900 members of FOP Lodges throughout Kansas, we strongly endorse and encourage the passage of this legislation in order to include the Law Enforcement Officers of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, into the Kansas Police and Fire Retirement System.

Our fellow officers of the KDWPT, who daily work as full-time law enforcement officers need to be included in the same retirement system that is generally afforded to all state law enforcement officers. These officers are no different in the eyes of the public and they conduct the exact same tasks which all other law enforcement officers in Kansas do on a daily basis. Agencies across the state treat these officers as they would any other law enforcement, and moreover, fellow officers consider KWDPT Officers as peers. There is no reason that they should be treated differently. Particularly in smaller communities, local police departments and sheriff's offices heavily rely on KDWPT Officers for mutual aid and assistance.

The officers of the KDWPT proudly represent the badge they wear on their uniforms with honor. They enforce all the same laws as their fellow officers. KDWPT Officers part in the criminal justice system is treated exactly the same as any other officer in this state. They represent authority, they investigate crimes, and they make arrests. When they do, there is no adjustment in the judicial system simply because cases involve KDWPT Officers.

Not only do the law-abiding citizens of Kansas view these officers as law enforcement, those persons who chose to break our laws see them as any other authority. This places KDWPT Officers in the exact same forefront of danger that all law enforcement officers face every day. Because they represent authority, they are subject to the same in-bound aggression that criminals often use. This certainly qualifies them all for the benefits of the same retirement system afforded to others who face those same issues.

The FOP stands unified in the support of the KDWPT Officers joining the Kansas Police and Fire Retirement System and we urge the passage of this bill.

Respectfully,

Mik Shanks
FOP State President