

Testimony for the House Veterans and Military Committee 07 February 2023

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify for HB 2211 today on behalf of the Adjutant General's Department.

In March of 2011, Governor Brownback's Executive Order 11-05 appointed the Adjutant General as the Homeland Security Advisor of the State of Kansas and the Director of the Kansas Office of Homeland Security. In the nearly 12 years since then, homeland security professionals representing law enforcement, information technology, bioscience, agriculture, and private sector owners and operators of Kansas' critical infrastructure have worked together to protect Kansas against terrorism, foreign malign activities, and disruptive threats to critical networks.

Every single day these dedicated patriots quietly carry out their duties, identifying threats presented in non-routine situations, by asymmetric actors, and in emerging dynamics that threaten our critical infrastructure. They directly support senior government officials and agencies as well as industry leaders in understanding threats, and they work to develop solutions and strategies to protect Kansas' economic security and the individual freedoms of our citizens.

If you are wondering what we, as a state, face in the years ahead, the short answer is a wildly complex geopolitical security environment featuring old and emergent actors; non-state entities and aggressive nation states gaining access to, and increasingly employing, powerful new technologies and capabilities; and a modern civilization ever dependent on interlinked networks in ways not previously contemplated. Emerging fields like artificial intelligence, synthetic biology, nanotechnology, computer automation/machine learning, and quantum computing, offer amazing promise. However, in the hands of those who wish us harm, these powerful tools become effective weapons to destabilize, kill, and defeat. The potential of advanced technologies and economic development offers Kansas businesses and industry tremendous promise, but those opportunities will need to be defended against misappropriation, intellectual property theft, and harm from the same groups previously mentioned.

Given these and other homeland security threats, we ask that the Legislature formalize the Kansas Homeland Security Office as outlined in the proposed bill. HB 2211 codifies the decade's previous work by adding an article to Chapter 48 for Kansas Homeland Security, with

sections for definitions, establishment, and powers and duties of the Kansas Homeland Security Advisor. The purpose of this legislation is to designate a state entity specifically tasked with responsibilities and coordination among all homeland security partners. Its continuing role will be to work with governmental and critical infrastructure partners to continue the identification of current threats and disruptive trends, placing Kansas in the best possible position to navigate an uncertain future, and emerge into that future not only safer, but as a stronger and more prosperous state.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to speak today, and I stand ready for your questions.

Respectfully submitted by:

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