

SENATE FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SB 387

Testimony of

Doug Jorgensen

Acting State Fire Marshal January – July 2011

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to give testimony in support of changes to the current requirements for the position of Kansas State Fire Marshal.

As acting State Fire Marshal from January of 2011 – July 2011, I testified before this committee on the issues pertaining to the Fire Marshal's Office and the bill to dissolve the office. I also shared with the committee the issues and problems I found with the office and the steps that were taken to correct those problems. Based on the changes instituted by myself and Terry Maple, an interim committee, has made a recommendation to keep the Fire Marshal's office intact. A decision that I support and believe is in the best interest of the State.

I am asking the committee to further amend Senate Bill 387 to broaden the base requirements for the Fire Marshal's position even more. I am requesting that the language requiring knowledge of building construction be removed from the statute. I am also requesting that the committee expand the "five year experience" requirement to read—"five years in fire prevention and inspection experience and/or safety inspection experience and/or investigation experience".

I believe that I and the current acting Fire Marshal, Terry Maple, have shown that administering the Fire Marshal's Office can be successfully done with limited or no experience in Fire Safety inspection/investigation experience. By expanding and broadening the requirements for the position, I believe the committee will give the Governor's office, with Senate confirmation, an increased ability to appoint the right candidate for the position. A candidate with good administrative skills who can rely on the professionals at the Fire Marshal's Office and those in the Fire safety community, for guidance and input on the inspection, regulation, and investigation responsibilities of the office.

The first quality of the Fire Marshal should be good administrative skills and an ability to lead the agency. It should be based on any of the three fields referred to above, and not that they just have experience in the fire service. Without a change to the current requirements for the Fire Marshal's position, candidates such as I and Terry Maple could not be considered, which I believe would be a deterrent to the State and the agency.

Thank you for considering this proposal.