



SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

KELLY B. ARNOLD
COUNTY CLERK

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March 14, 2013

Chairman Ostmeyer,

I am writing to ask you to consider a change to the language requiring the Secretary of State to determine a format for minutes in Senate Bill 10. As Sedgwick County Clerk this bill will directly affect my office, and offices such as mine across the state. The specific language in question can be found in section e, lines 38 through 40 on page 4 of the bill. The citizens of Sedgwick County and across the State of Kansas have a right to have access to the proceedings of all government public meetings.

The Sedgwick County Clerk's Office keeps verbatim minutes for Board of Sedgwick County Commissioners' proceeding. Specifically, every word spoken in the meeting is recorded in the minutes. This function supports the mission of providing citizen access to government. Our constituents have requested copies of these minutes on countless occasions. This format allows them to receive complete information regarding the action taken as well as the reasoning and all factors which were considered in making the decision. These minutes have provided information and protection in legal proceedings as well.

I believe that verbatim minutes are our citizens' best method of receiving full and complete access as provided for under the Kansas Open Meeting Act. I would support striking the wording requiring that the Secretary of State determine the format of the minutes. This would allow Sedgwick County to continue producing our comprehensive verbatim minutes and would not diminish the amount of information available to our citizens.

The citizens of this state have entrusted the Legislature to preserve their right to open access in government. To decrease the amount of information available by restricting the comprehensive nature of our minutes would be counterproductive. I appreciate your consideration of the current language of SB 10 as well as for the changes I have suggested.

Sincerely,

Kelly B. Arnold
Sedgwick County Clerk