

Testimony before the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs
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Good Morning. Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony this morning. My name is Carol Barta, and I serve as the Assistant Director of the North Central Kansas Libraries System headquartered in Manhattan. I am speaking today in opposition to HB 2380, a bill moving the responsibility of appointing representatives to the system board from the Governor's office to the county commissions.

Each of the seven library systems is governed by a board of representatives from each library participating in the system. For North Central Kansas Library System that includes forty (40) legally established public libraries, 6 outlet libraries, 5 high schools, 2 technical colleges, 2 private colleges, Kansas State University and the post library at Fort Riley. In addition there is one appointee from each of the eight counties in which NCKLS levies taxes who, until now, have been appointed by the Governor's office to represent the areas not within the boundaries of a public library.

In the past systems have worked together with member libraries and the Governor's office to seek out interested and qualified candidates for these positions. It is not always easy to find candidates, which has created a burden on the Governor's staff. HB 2380 shifts that burden to the already overburdened county commissions.

We believe SB205 is a better solution to this problem. The bill moves responsibility for the appointment of these representatives to the state librarian with approval of the state library advisory board. Since the state librarian and the regional library system directors work together on a day to day basis there is a well established flow of communication which is required when seeking candidates and making appointments.

In the course of her duties, the state librarian comes into contact with people state-wide who are concerned about libraries in their communities. The state librarian understands what qualities an appointee will need to be an effective board member. Since county commissions rarely deal with library issues on a regular basis, it will be more difficult for them to vet candidates for the system board.

We ask that you do not approve HB2380 at this time, but allow SB205 to be brought forward.