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To: Rep. Kristey Williams, Chair, and members of the Local Government Committee

From: Scott Stanford, Publisher, Lawrence Journal-World

Re: HB 2247

Rep. Williams and members of the committee:

I am writing to express my opposition to House Bill 2247, which would authorize the use of internet websites for legal publications. I fear this bill would do great damage to newspapers, local governments and most importantly, the public good.

Because of the depth and reach of community newspapers, existing public notice law has worked effectively for decades to keep citizens well informed of local government activity. Community newspapers are overwhelmingly the most trusted source for coverage of local government. In the majority of Kansas communities, the local newspaper is the singular source for coverage of local school boards, city councils, planning commissions, water districts and more. And newspapers remain where the public looks and expects to find local government public notices. There simply is no substitute.

In our most recent reader survey, 82 percent of Douglas County residents said they spend as much or more time reading the print edition of the *Journal-World* as they do reading the website, ljworld.com. In fact, 25 percent said they only read the print edition. This represents a sizable portion — more than 25,000 residents — of our audience who is left out any time we publish to the Internet something that is not also published in the print newspaper. We don't do it. We make all news and information, including public notices, available in print and in multiple locations on the internet.

Allowing local governments to publish notices only to a government-designated website would diminish public awareness of the notices. It would diminish the oversight and accountability newspapers provide in the public notice process. Finally, it would bring financial harm to nearly every community newspaper in Kansas, further depleting the resources available to provide coverage of local government. In that regard, House Bill 2247 serves the best interests of no one — not newspapers, not local government and certainly not the public.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my opposition to HB 2247.

Sincerely,



Scott T. Stanford