

Verbal Testimony
2023 Special Committee on Homelessness
Thursday, November 9, 2023

Dear Chairman Averkamp and members of the Committee:

Thank you for your continued interest regarding Homelessness and its effects on all aspects of our community. I'm going to focus my testimony on the impact this has on our business community in Lawrence, KS.

I am the President of Weaver's Department Store. Weaver's has proudly served our customers on Massachusetts St since 1857. A key component to our success in the past and our existence today is we try to see the world through the eyes of our employees and customers.

In my verbal testimony I will briefly address the following:

- Safety is not interpreted by a third party. A mother feels safe parking her car in a public place and taking her children somewhere or she does not. A group of girlfriends feel safe going shopping and dining at certain places or they do not.
- There must be policies (laws) in place to deal with bad actors and criminal behavior.
- Lawrence has a brand problem. We are attracting and welcoming problems from other states instead of recruiting individuals, families and businesses who would enrich our region and state. Unmistakably Lawrence has become a cringeworthy slogan.

For the sake of our University system, the economy of northeast Kansas and the ability to attract and keep the greatest talent in our state, we must not let what has transpired in Lawrence to spin further out of control.

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