

HB 396 -- KANSAS CITY POLICE BOARD

SPONSOR: Richey

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Public Safety by a vote of 5 to 2. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 7 to 3.

This bill provides that the Board Of Police Commissioners in Kansas City cannot require, as a condition of employment, that any currently employed or prospective law enforcement officer or other employee reside within any jurisdictional limit. Any current residency requirement in effect on or before August 28, 2021, will not apply and will not be enforced.

The bill also provides that the Board of Police Commissioners may impose a residency rule, but the rule or requirement cannot be more restrictive than requiring personnel to reside within a one-hour response time.

This bill is the same as SB 53 (2021).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this removes an antiquated limiter that has been in place for years in KC. It removes an element that puts employees and officers in a predicament that forces them to arbitrarily choose where to live. There is a growing challenge when it comes to the employees of the police department when they get married and they have to decide where to live or there are custody orders that dictate where the person lives but there is this issue with a residency requirement. This is arbitrary. The philosophy behind this has been debunked, and this has been heard before. Officers have received threats by people who say they know where their kids go to school or know where the officers live. The argument that officers cannot do a good job because they do not live in the city they patrol.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Richey; Brad Lemon, Kansas City Fraternal Order of Police; and Arnie Dienoff.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that there was no agreement that the residency requirement would be repealed after the St. Louis one was repealed, even though some people think it should have been. Kansas City Police Department is not down officers because of the residency requirement; it is down because of the environment they have to work in.

Testifying against the bill were Sharon Jones, Missouri State Conference Of The NAACP; City of Kansas City, and the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.