

SS#2 SJR 38 -- POLICE DEPARTMENT FUNDING

SPONSOR: Luetkemeyer (Richey)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Public Safety by a vote of 6 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 5 to 3.

Currently, the General Assembly cannot require a city to increase an activity or service beyond that required by existing law unless a state appropriation is made to pay the city for any increase costs.

This proposed Constitutional amendment, if approved by the voters, provides an exception to allow for a law that increases minimum funding, if increased before December 31, 2026, for a police force established by a state board of police commissioners to ensure they have additional resources to serve their communities.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that, last year, a Jackson County judge ruled that the mayor and city council in Kansas City violated state law when it attempted to strip \$42 million from the Kansas City Police Department budget. There were secret meetings about intentions to cut the budget, bypassing the Board of Police Commissioners' exclusive authority to determine police spending. The money was going to be diverted to community outreach and other social services. This would provide an exception to the Hancock amendment by allowing the General Assembly to set minimum funding requirements for the police department. There will be long-lasting and dangerous consequences if the police department's budget is cut. People are worried about safety.

Testifying for the bill was Senator Luetkemeyer.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the city has consistently funded the Kansas City Police Department budget at 26-28% of its total budget. They consistently fund with more than required but the frustration was that the money was not going to what the city council wanted it to go to. This bill would disincentivize the council to give more than is required. It is really important for us to remember that crime and poverty in our state are intricately connected. The issue was not that the city was trying to defund the police; instead, it was trying to go a different direction in addressing crime, such as by addressing poverty. Over the years we have been putting more and more and more responsibility on law enforcement, versus potentially handling an issue like homelessness through a social worker team.

Testifying against the bill were Susan Gibson; Mallory Rusch, Empower Missouri; City of Kansas City and Kansas City Chamber; and Arnie C. Dienoff.

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.