

Senate Judiciary Committee

House Bill 2755

PROPONENT

March 20, 2024

Chairwoman Warren and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Chase Hobart and I wanted to offer you a unique perspective into why I support the passing of this bill. I am a prior law enforcement officer, having worked in the field from 2008 to 2020. During my tenure I witnessed some of the most unthinkable things a person could encounter. The unique part I spoke of is that I was [during my time as a law enforcement officer] and still am married to a bail bondsman. I would get upset occasionally when I would put someone in jail for a crime they committed then my wife would be there to get them right out before I could even return to my jurisdiction and complete the required paperwork. But I knew I had done my job in holding someone accountable for their actions. My wife does the same thing in her line of work.

Not only is it necessary to pass SB 2755 to keep good, honest working bail bondsmen working and providing a constitutional service for their community of due process, but it also provides financial assistance to their respective families, keeping food on the table and the lights on. When I first heard of these bondsmen doing this "discount bonding" I shrugged it off but quickly realized how detrimental it was to all facets of the judicial system. When you get someone out of jail for little or no money, the criminal could not care less about the ramifications of their actions since there is no "stake in the game" for them. When you hold them accountable by paying the industry standard 10%, it at least makes them think twice about not appearing before the court and answering to their charges. It also holds their co-signer, whether a family member or friend, responsible for ensuring the defendant attends all their court proceedings. When we allow this type of "discount bonding" to happen we not only create havoc for our judicial system, but also for law enforcement who must repeatedly respond to calls for service to the same address and to the same individuals involved, putting the community-at-large at risk for dangerous situations to happen. Case and point, several incidents in Sedgwick County alone would prove this point.

Regarding the matter of E-bonding, I am sort of surprised that this has even been allowed to happen. In law enforcement, honesty, accountability, and integrity are three of the core values of just about any agency in Kansas. When we allow E-bonding to happen, we do not have any checks and balances in place to ensure bondsmen are being honest in who is writing the bond. This, then, causes accountability and integrity issues, especially since it is required that a licensed agent be the one writing the bond.

Finally, I feel it necessary to say that I have heard of bail agencies hiring convicted felons to work for them and write bonds. While I am a big proponent of people improving their lives, I spent a better part of my life putting felons behind bars. It is a common trend amongst felons to continue repeated behavior and when you have felons getting felons out of jail, it does not fare well for the bail bonding industry. The industry itself already faces criticism by the general public, especially in felony situations, whether through word-of-mouth/gossip or through mainstream media. The very last thing they need to defend is the actions of a felon bonding out another felon. It is my belief that bail bondsmen should be held to the same higher standard that I once was held to as a law enforcement officer. This simply cannot be accomplished when you allow felons to write bonds.

Respectfully submitted,

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