



March 8, 2024

Honorable Members of the Kansas House of Representatives,

I want to offer my testimony regarding House Bill 2815, which aims to abolish the Local Ad Valorem Tax Reduction Fund (LAVTRF). As a Mayor, I am deeply invested in the well-being of my community and I urge you to maintain, fund and distribute the LAVTRF funds in our State budget.

The Local Ad Valorem Tax Reduction Fund has played (and can play again), a crucial role in supporting local governments by providing financial relief through property tax reductions. This fund enables municipalities to alleviate the burden on taxpayers while still fulfilling essential responsibilities such as maintaining infrastructure, providing public safety services, and supporting education.

While I understand the need for fiscal responsibility and efficient use of taxpayer dollars, abolishing the LAVTRF will create economic harm to citizens, creating long-term negative consequences. It is imperative to consider the following points before moving forward with HB2815:

1. **Impact on Taxpayers:** The LAVTRF directly benefits taxpayers by reducing property tax bills. Abolishing this fund could result in increased tax burdens for homeowners and businesses, potentially placing undue strain on individuals and hindering economic growth.
2. **Local Government Autonomy:** The LAVTRF grants local governments the flexibility to address the unique needs of their communities. Eliminating this fund could restrict their ability to make decisions tailored to local circumstances, undermining the principle of local governance.
3. **Community Services:** Many essential services, such as public safety, education, and infrastructure maintenance, rely on funding provided through property taxes. Abolishing the LAVTRF could lead to budget cuts in these areas, compromising the quality of life for residents and businesses alike.

Before taking action on HB2815, I urge you to engage in thorough deliberation and consider alternative solutions that promote fiscal responsibility without jeopardizing the well-being of our communities. Additionally, I encourage you to seek input from a diverse range of stakeholders, including local government officials, like myself as well as community leaders, and taxpayers, to ensure that all perspectives are taken into account.

In conclusion, I implore you maintain the LAVTRF and prioritize the long-term interests of Kansas residents when evaluating House Bill 2815. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lou Thurston", written in a cursive style.

Lou Thurston, Mayor
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