

Subject: Letter of Support for House Bill 2036 – Disabled Veterans Property Tax Relief

Isreal Waddell

Director of Military Affairs – Junction City, KS / Geary County, KS

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FR - Total: 1.98 Billion Vet Exp: 304 million

Leverworth:

Jeff Underhill & Nathan Butler

Representative

Junction City, KS, 66441

Dear Leaders,

On behalf of Junction City and Geary County, Kansas’s Military Affairs Council, I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for House Bill 2036- Disabled Veterans Property Tax Relief. As a U.S. Army Veteran, a military spouse, and on behalf of the Military Affairs Council who oversees all things “quality of life” for the Veterans, Military Servicemembers, and their families, I believe that this legislation is crucial for Veterans, current military servicemembers and Kansas as a whole. With Geary County ranking #1 for the largest population of Veterans in the state of Kansas, partly because we have the largest Military Base (Fort Riley) right in our community, I urge you to consider the following reasons for the passing of HB2036.

1. **Recognition of Service:** Provides a tangible acknowledgment and appreciation for the sacrifices made by disabled veterans in service to their country. Demonstrates community support and gratitude for veterans' service, fostering a sense of belonging and appreciation within the local population.
2. **Financial Assistance / Health & Well-being:** Eases the financial burden on disabled veterans, allowing them to maintain homeownership and stability. Reduced financial stress through property tax relief can positively impact the mental and emotional well-being of disabled veterans, potentially contributing to improved health outcomes.
3. **Quality of Life Improvement & Stability:** Enhances the overall quality of life for disabled veterans by reducing one significant financial obligation. Property tax relief can contribute to housing stability for disabled veterans, allowing them to remain in their homes and communities, which can have broader societal benefits.
4. **Retention of Skilled Workforce:** Every year at Fort Riley, 2,300-2600 Soldiers transition from the Army and a vast number of those servicemembers will have Disabilities from service through the VA. Providing tax relief may encourage disabled veterans, who often possess valuable skills and experience, to remain in or relocate to a community, contributing to the local workforce.

5. Federal Spending and Economic Impact: Each veteran with a disability 30%-100% (our target audience) receives Federal compensation. The majority of those earned funds are spent locally in the state which impacts the growing economy in Kansas. Kansas benefits from federal spending on defense, indirectly supporting the local economy. Fort Riley's economic impact alone has been at least \$1.8B for the past 3 years.

6: Reimbursement to the Counties: HB2036 establishes a mechanism for the state to reimburse counties and school districts (exceeding 3%) for lost tax revenues resulting from these exemptions, ensuring financial support for local entities affected by the proposed changes.

I commend your efforts in championing this cause, and I firmly believe that HB2036 will have a positive impact on the Veterans of not only Geary County, but Kansas as a whole. Your dedication to improving the quality of life for your people is commendable and aligns with the values of our community.

I kindly urge you to continue your support for this bill as it goes before the Senate Tax Committee, and I am hopeful that it will receive the backing it deserves. If there is any way the Military Affairs Council can assist or contribute further to this cause, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time and dedication to making positive changes in our community. I appreciate your commitment to our Veterans, and I look forward to witnessing the positive outcomes that HB2036 will bring.

Better Together,

Isreal Waddell
Director, Military Affairs Council
Junction City, KS / Geary County, KS