



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation
In Support of SB442
Erik A. Lindseth, Vice President and General Counsel
Life Time Fitness, Inc.
March 13, 2012**



Chairperson Donovan and Members of the Committee:

Life Time Fitness, Inc. ("Life Time") supports the passage of SB442 as amended.

Life Time operates 95 centers under the LIFE TIME FITNESS® and LIFE TIME ATHLETICSM brands in the United States and Canada, including two centers in suburban Kansas City. Both are large centers that feature cardiovascular, resistance and free-weight training equipment, instruction and programming. These centers also feature advanced training studios and dedicated areas supported by a certified staff of personal trainers and group fitness instructors who assist our members in achieving their health and fitness goals. Our centers also offer a variety of other amenities and programs that enhance our fitness focus, including swimming pools, basketball courts, climbing walls, group fitness, yoga and Pilates studios and classes, nutrition and weight loss programs, and kids activities and camps.

Life Time's core mission is to help members live a healthy way of life by meeting the health and fitness needs of the entire family. We aim to help communities, organizations and individuals achieve their total health objectives, athletic aspirations and/or fitness goals by doing what they love. We help our members focus not just on their physical fitness—whether they exercise on their own or with guidance and support from our certified personal and group trainers—but also on their overall health. Our broader focus on health is manifested in numerous ways in our Kansas clubs. Our in-club cafes sell healthy food. Our weight loss programs combine exercise, nutrition, assessments and support in ways that can be individually tailored to help members lose weight sustainably. We offer various personal health assessments for members to understand their own bodies, including testing for body mass, strength, flexibility, cardiovascular capabilities, metabolism, heart rate and more. We have designed and built our Kansas clubs to create a positive experience that brings a family together, contributing to a balanced life.

In Kansas, Life Time's property tax is a significant fixed operating cost which, among other costs, impacts not only our membership dues rates, but also our capacity to offer these services and products. Because we are firmly committed to helping people improve their health, any reduction in our operating costs would translate into a greater opportunity to develop, improve and expand our innovative healthy-way-of-life offerings. Tax relief thus has the potential to enhance health and fitness in Kansas.

Moreover, in bringing our health clubs, programs and employees to Kansas, Life Time must compete directly with non-profit health clubs, such as the YMCA, that offer comparable amenities and services in health clubs that pay no property taxes at all. This tax inequity generates unfair competition, leaving for-profit health clubs at a competitive disadvantage. SB442 would eliminate this fundamental unfairness, permitting similar businesses—non-profit and for-profit health clubs—to compete equally on the merits of the services they provide. We believe Kansans would be healthier for it.

I regret that I am unable to attend the hearing, but I thank you for your consideration of this testimony. Along with the Kansas Health and Fitness Association, we encourage the members of the Committee to support SB442 for the improved health of Kansans.

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Attachment # 8