

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE CAPITOL
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
(785) 296-7653
debbie.deere@house.ks.gov



100 E KANSAS, SUITE 101
LANSING, KS 66043
(913) 683-9894

DEBBIE DEERE
40TH DISTRICT

Testimony of Representative Debbie Deere

To the House Taxation Committee

Supporting the passage of House Bill 2554

Chairman Johnson and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing me the time today to speak in support of HB 2554. I have introduced this legislation on behalf of Brothers in Blue Reentry (BIBR), which provides programming to offenders incarcerated at Lansing Correctional Facility.

BIBR is a faith-based organization established in 2011. It consists of a small staff and a multitude of volunteers. It provides programming to offenders who are nearing their release date from incarceration at LCF. BIBR partners offenders with a mentor from the faith community, who assists them throughout the program and upon their release. This is a very intense, evidence-based program that has very specific expectations that the offenders must abide by to be eligible, participate, and graduate. The offenders are also held to a high standard of accountability during every phase of participation.

BIBR has a method to measure its success. Its graduates have a recidivism rate of only 13%, when the state average is 35%. The success rates of this program allow these men to be contributing citizens to their family, work, community, and society.

This success also provides a significant savings to the State by reducing the number of prison beds needed for returning offenders. While the fiscal note on this is stated at \$27,000 annually, the savings this program brings to the state is over \$300,000 annually. Mr. Hughes, Executive Director of BIBR, will elaborate on the calculation of that information.

I have had the opportunity to attend BIBR events, both inside and outside of the facility. I have met their dedicated staff, volunteers, mentors, and many of the participants and graduates of the program. I have been impressed and inspired by the sincerity and kindness of everyone involved. I have heard success stories told by offenders during their pre and post release. I

[Type text]

have heard many of the heartfelt stories told by the volunteers, who shared that their lives are also changed for the better by meeting and working with BIBR participants.

BIBR funding relies on donations. Their request for your consideration of this tax exemption is very sincere and the savings from this could allow them to better serve their clients in many ways.

I know that this committee has a difficult task in prioritizing these requests that are brought before you. I thank you for your time today and ask for your consideration of the favorable passage of this bill.