

## **VETERANS AND MILITARY COMMITTEE**

Representative Lonnie Clark, Chair

### **Testimony on HB 2037**

Gregg Burden, Director

Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs Office

**February 5, 2019**

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to brief the Veterans and Military Committee. I am Gregg Burden, Director of the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office.

The Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office (KCVAO) is privileged to support the nearly quarter million veterans who live in the State of Kansas. Our mission is to serve Kansas veterans, survivors, and their dependents with dignity and compassion. The KCVAO is a principal advocate in ensuring that they receive information, advice, direction, and assistance through the coordination of programs and services on state and federal benefits: medical care, benefits, social support, and lasting memorials in recognition of their service to Kansas and the nation.

The KCVAO fully supports House Bill 2037 updating the veterans benefit lottery game fund. This important bill benefits the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office and the Kansas National Guard by providing funding stability for both organizations. This bill also helps the Kansas Lottery by providing flexibility with different ticket options that allows them to maximize higher revenue tickets.

Last year we introduced legislation updating the veterans benefit lottery game fund that didn't get passed but was inserted as a two-year proviso by Senator Tom Hawk. General Tafanelli, the Adjutant General of Kansas, Terry Presta, the former Kansas Lottery Director, and myself met multiple times to coordinate and construct this legislation that benefits everyone involved. All parties impacted by this bill last year agreed that this was a good bill and supported this legislation. Our goal and hope are to pass this legislation and make these positive changes permanent and not dependent on a proviso.

This legislation will benefit all parties involved by:

- Providing the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office (KCVAO) with a predictable funding source that is not dependent on the sales of Veterans Scratch Off tickets provided by the Kansas Lottery
- Providing the Kansas National Guard (KNG) with a predictable funding source that is not dependent on the sales of Veterans Scratch Off tickets provided by the Kansas Lottery

- Provides increased funding for the KCVAO and KNG each year with a provision for a 5% increase
- Allows the Kansas Lottery flexibility to introduce different ticket options that are more popular and allows them to maximize higher revenue tickets
- Supports KCVAO and KNG with the ability to accurately budget and forecast important programs impacted with this funding by eliminating revenue swings up and down each year

This legislation will be a practical step forward for our agency as we strive to provide the best possible care and services to our deserving veterans. Predictable, stable, and transparent funding from this bill will allow us to maximize our support to deserving veterans without having to guess each year what funding we will receive. This will ultimately result in an improvement of the services and safety of our veterans.

On behalf of the KCVAO, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to brief the committee and for your continued support. I look forward to working with the House Veterans and Military Committee and other parties as we move forward working together helping veterans and their dependents. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

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

Gregg Burden

Director

Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs Office