KANSAS ADJUTANT GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT
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Testimony on House Bill 2037 Relating to the Veterans Benefit Lottery Game
Presented to the House Committee on Veterans and Military
February 5, 2019

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB 2037. I would like to begin by thanking the members of the committee for your continued support of our Guardsmen and veterans across the state.

Last year the legislature took action to fully fund our State Tuition Assistance program, bringing Kansas' National Guard educational benefits on par with the benefits Guardsmen earn in our surrounding states. In an extremely challenging recruiting environment, this program and competitive benefits are critical to being able to reach our personnel strength requirements. Since the legislature took action last year the Kansas Air National Guard has increased their personnel strength from 89% to 94% of their requirement and last month the Kansas Army National Guard won a national award for the highest year over year improvement in recruiting across the country. We still face significant challenges in meeting our personnel strength goals but we are heading in the right direction and these accomplishments would not have been possible without the legislature's support and a fully funded tuition assistance program.

HB 2037 takes an important step towards ensuring the program remains solvent into the future. A portion of the proceeds from the Veterans Benefit Lottery game help fund the State Tuition Assistance program. However, fluctuations in revenue make it difficult to budget the full requirements of the program from year to year and increase the risk of not living up to the commitments made to our service members. HB 2037 provides funding stability for both the State Tuition Assistance program and the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs. Additionally, it provides much needed flexibility for the Kansas Lottery in administering the Veterans Benefit Lottery game. For these reasons, I would like to express my support for HB 2037.

On behalf of the men and women in the Adjutant General's Department, thank you again for your continued support and thank you for the great honor of allowing us to defend our home state and nation. We know we could not do what we do without your support.

Respectfully submitted by:

Maj Gen Lee E. Tafanelli
Kansas Adjutant General
5 February 2019