

State of Kansas  
House of Representatives

State Capitol  
Topeka, Kansas 66612



(785) 291-3500  
blake.carpenter@house.ks.gov

Blake Carpenter  
House Speaker Pro Tempore  
Representative, 81st District

1/25/24

House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development,

I am here today to voice my strong support for House Bill 2544, a critical piece of legislation aimed at enhancing recruitment and retention within our Kansas National Guard.

House Bill 2544 represents a thoughtful and supportive approach to the challenges faced by the Kansas Army and Air National Guard. This legislation thoughtfully introduces tax credits that serve a dual purpose in supporting our service members. Firstly, it proposes an employer tax credit, which is designed to encourage businesses to hire and retain National Guard members. This credit not only offers a financial incentive but also gently discourages businesses from inadvertently drawing our dedicated Guardsmen and women away from their essential military duties. It recognizes the importance of maintaining a balance between civilian employment and military service, promoting an environment where businesses can become allies in supporting our National Guard.

The inclusion of a personal tax credit for Guard members in HB2544 is a compassionate gesture that speaks to the heart of our commitment to these individuals. This tax credit serves as an encouragement for National Guard members to continue their service, offering them a tangible reason to stay. It acknowledges the sacrifices they make and provides a form of support that can make a significant difference in their lives. This initiative aims to create a more stable and rewarding environment for those who have chosen to serve, helping to ensure that their dedication to our state and nation is met with the support and recognition it deserves.

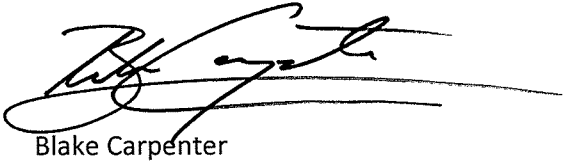
The National Guard faces significant recruitment and retention challenges, primarily due to financial concerns and the difficulties in balancing military and civilian obligations. HB2544 directly addresses these issues by making military service a more viable and attractive option. The employer tax credit eases the potential reluctance of businesses to hire Guard members due to possible deployment-related absences, thus securing the civilian employment of these service members. Meanwhile, the individual tax credit for Guard members enhances the appeal of serving in the National Guard, encouraging more individuals to commit to this noble cause.

Beyond the direct benefits to Guard members, HB2544 holds substantial economic and community advantages. It fosters a more robust employment environment for Guard members, leading to greater job stability and contributing positively to our local economies. The symbiotic relationship between the National Guard and the community is also strengthened, as hiring Guard members promotes a shared sense of responsibility and engagement. This mutual support not only enhances the quality of life for our service members but also fortifies the community resilience of Kansas.

In my service with the Kansas Air National Guard, I have seen the dedication and sacrifices of our troops. However, I have also witnessed the challenges they face, particularly the financial strains of balancing their service with civilian life. HB2544 is a personal mission for me; it's about ensuring our service members receive the support they deserve. This bill is more than legislation; it is a commitment to our servicemen and women, showing that Kansas stands behind them in both words and actions.

In conclusion, I urge this committee and my fellow legislators to support HB2544. This bill is not just a support mechanism for the Kansas National Guard; it is a reinforcement of our community values and an investment in our state's economy. By passing this bill, we are affirming our commitment to those who serve and protect us.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blake Carpenter", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Blake Carpenter