

VETERANS AND MILITARY COMMITTEE

Representative Lonnie Clark, Chair

Testimony on HB 2362

Gregg Burden, Director

Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs Office

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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 2362 establishing the Kansas military and veteran task force. This important bill will illuminate significant issues concerning our military facilities, missions, military members and their families, and veterans who reside in Kansas. This proposal is a programmatic approach that will standardize the process of how we gather information and prioritize options concerning our military facilities, military members and veterans. The strategic and economic impact of these vital resources in Kansas must be preserved and leveraged for the good of Kansas and the Nation for the future.

The formation of this task force complements the Governor's Military Affairs Committee by adding important segments of our military community who can add value to this process. Adding more diversity to the process will provide new and innovative ideas that will enhance and optimize our military presence in Kansas.

Kansas needs to be proactive and not reactive to the needs of the military and veterans otherwise our state will lose valuable missions, resources, and capabilities which make us competitive in the national and global markets. We must explore and exploit opportunities as they surface and utilize the tremendous resources that exists here to maximize and leverage our strong private and public sector