



March 11, 2022

Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2732.

Established in 1899 and covering 160 acres, Gage Park is considered by many as the gem of the Shawnee County parks system. The park offers a variety of amenities such as the Kansas Children's Discovery Center, the Topeka Zoo, Carousel in the Park, Blaisdell Family Aquatic Center, Helen Hocker Theater, Hill's Bark Park, the famed Reinisch Rose Garden, the iconic Mini-Train and much more. With more than one million visitors annually, Gage park draws people from the region and beyond.

The park currently faces a significant amount of deferred maintenance. The Mini-Train and tracks, Doran Rock Garden and West Lake Pond require immediate repairs. The playgrounds, shelters and park infrastructure are aging and need renovation. As the Reinisch Rose garden approaches its centennial, it needs a refresh to maintain its beauty. Gage Park has served the community well for the past 100 years, but needs significant attention to continue serving future generations.

The bill before this Committee would allow the residents of Shawnee County to show how important Gage Park is to them and their families. If successful, this bill could provide a dedicated funding source to ensure Gage Park continues to be a source of pride for current and future residents of Topeka and Shawnee County.

I appreciate your consideration.

Tim L. Laurent

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim L. Laurent".

Director, Shawnee County Parks and Recreation



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