

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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CHRISTOPHER D. CROFT
8TH DISTRICT

March 24, 2021

Senate Ways and Means Committee
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Chairman Billinger and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for HB2021.

After the 2019 session I organized a strategic planning event for the veteran community. Twenty-seven (27) veteran service organizations (VSOs) from around the state met here in the Capitol. We brought in facilitators and set up sessions to help the VSOs establish a unified priority list. The Governor's office, several state agencies and other legislators attended the session as well. After a full day of activities, the facilitators presented the top 5 items and the group approved. By far, the #1 item was a Veteran's Home in Northeast (NE) Kansas.

The other priority items included:

- Property Tax relief
- Toll road exemption for disabled veterans
- Occupational Licensing
- In-state tuition for Children and Spouses of military members / veterans regardless of state of residence

We typically look at how we are doing in comparison with other states.

State	# Veterans	% of Adults	# Veteran Homes
Colorado	367,292	8.2%	5
Kansas	165,033	7.5%	2
Missouri	382,548	8.1%	7
Nebraska	112,177	7.7%	4
Oklahoma	261,559	8.8%	7

* Based on Statista Research Department published Jan 20, 2021, <https://veteransaidbenefit.org>

The two Kansas Veteran Homes are in Fort Dodge and Fort Scott areas. Both homes are more than a six hour round trip from the NE region. In numerous discussions across the NE region with military members, veterans, service organizations, and elected officials at all levels, I continue to hear a very strong desire to create Veteran Home(s) in the NE region to fill a real and present need for our Kansas veteran community.

I want to thank the committee for your time and ask for your support of this important legislation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Croft", written over a horizontal line.

Rep. Chris Croft
District 8, Overland Park & Olathe