

Dear Madam Chairwoman Tyson and Members of the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee,

I fully support SCR 1610 and urge you to do the same.

With the unprecedented covid pandemic, which forced many people to not leave their homes and unable to go to work, my wife and I wanted to get our family, consisting of five children, out of the city. At that time, we were renting a home in Gardner, KS for \$1800 per month.

On May 12, 2020, we purchased a rural home in Wellsville, KS (Miami County). Our new home, on 5 acres, allowed us to raise our children the way we wanted and teach them to be self sufficient, at a time where it was difficult, if not nearly impossible, to find groceries and necessities in the box stores.

I am a veteran and qualified for a 2% interest rate, which is the reason we decided to make the purchase. We paid \$354,000, which is what the home appraised for. Our monthly mortgage payment wasn't much more than our previous rental house. Less than three years later, Miami County is valuing our home at \$520,000, a \$166,000 increase. We have made no improvements to our home, with the exception of putting in a garden. The escrow account on our mortgage increases drastically every year, causing the overall mortgage payment to increase. I work for BNSF Railroad and make a decent living, but if our taxes and home owners insurance continue to rise at the rate they have been, I don't know how much longer I will be able to afford our home.

I also have elderly neighbors whom live on Social Security. Both couples live in older manufactured trailers, which are presently being valuated over \$350,000. These inflated property valuations will prevent them from qualifying for tax relief programs such as Safe Senior and the Homestead Act. Something needs to immediately be done about these outrageous property values, before many are driven out of their homes.

I fully understand that our taxes are determined by the mill levy, but our property valuations are also calculated into the equation. Both work hand in hand.

I urge your support for SCR 1610.

Sincerely,

Justin Donaldson

Senate District 37