

I wish to express my support for House Bill No. 2036. Full disclosure, I am a veteran and am very proud of my military service. I served this nation and state for more than 30 years. I also still serve in various veteran service organizations and network with other veterans about the work that our state government does. Leadership doesn't end when we are no longer formal leaders. As you know, veterans have a very high percentage of showing up at the polls.

My father served in the Korean War and over 11% of US citizens in his generation served in the armed forces. This metric dropped to about 4% during the Vietnam War era. Today, less than 1% of our citizenry have sworn to defend our nation and / or state. We are all aware of the recruiting difficulties the armed services face today, caused by a lack of value on service by our citizens.

Kansas hosts three major military installations as well as two heavily used Air National Guard Installations and the payroll center for the entire Coast Guard. As you know, active duty service personnel are allowed to claim any state as their home of record. These service members usually chose an address in a veteran friendly state. I'm sure you have noted the large amount of vehicles on our highways sporting Florida or Texas tags – these are states considered veteran friendly. When these service members finish their military service they move to the states where they have claimed as their homes of record, bringing all their earned revenue and talents in their military service to that state. I believe everyone in this room desires to keep these talented Americans as citizens of Kansas sharing their talents, resources and the buying power of their pensions within our great state. Remember, every federal dollar that comes into our state turns over 7 times, helping our economy to flourish.

As you know, the life of a military service member is very taxing on the person in the military, as well as on their families. These great Americans selflessly serve in the most extreme environments imaginable, allowing citizens at home to rest peacefully in their sleep. Without citizens willing to take on the hardships of military service our lifestyles will be imperiled.

I am aware that there are county commissioners in our state that are concerned with a loss of revenue if this bill becomes law. I believe this fear is short sighted because if we continue to grow veteran residents in these counties they will bring their income, talents, and citizenship to their chosen counties. If we step back and look at the big picture, recruiting permanent residents to Kansas, we are investing in our state and counties. I think this is the longer view, and the opportunities for growth in our state will grow tremendously if we can incentivize veterans who serve in Kansas to want to stay in Kansas, as I have.

Lastly, I want to thank all of you in this room for your service to our great state, and for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you.

Larry Hannan