

## Kansas Disabled Veterans Lobby - Written Testimony - HB2036 Proponent

HB2036, which proposes property tax exemptions for disabled veterans, is not merely a legislative matter; it is a crucial step towards enhancing Kansas's competitiveness and retaining its valuable citizens.

"Kansas is the 8th 'most moved from' state -Tuesday, January 2nd 2024" - [ABC](#)

"In 2022, 154,678.0 veterans lived in Kansas. That's a 27.89% decrease since 2012" - [usafacts.org](#)

Veterans, having devoted their time and risked their mental and physical well-being during service, face a challenging aftermath. The VA's rigorous medical assessment process is crucial in determining the extent of their disabilities and the consequent permanent impact on their lives.

However, there's a prevailing lack of understanding about the VA disability system, leading to misconceptions about the true struggles of our most affected veterans. It's important to recognize that imposing means-tested restrictions on our disabled veterans is unfair, especially when numerous states offer unconditional support, welcoming all disabled veterans regardless of income or property value.

In essence, a service-connected disability rating should not only be seen as a lifelong tax on a veteran's potential, but rather as a marker of their profound sacrifice. This bill seeks to address this by providing more significant property tax relief for veterans, acknowledging and compensating for the enduring impact of their service to our nation.

The Congressional Budget Office report reveals that disabled veterans face significant financial challenges. On average, they earn 16% less annually compared to non-disabled veterans, a difference amounting to approximately \$10,200. This gap is more pronounced for veterans with higher disability ratings. It's important to consider the long-term impact of this income disparity, which extends beyond immediate financial struggles to affect long-term savings, retirement, and overall quality of life. These challenges underscore the need for supportive measures without income or property limits. [CBO Dec. 2023 "Income of Working-Age Veterans Receiving Disability Compensation"](#)

To reverse this trend, we must adopt measures that other states have successfully implemented. States like Florida, Texas, and Virginia offer full property tax exemptions for disabled veterans without imposing income or property value limits. This approach not only honors the sacrifices of our veterans but also makes these states more attractive for residency. Income limits might exclude those who, despite a higher income, have substantial medical and living costs due to their disability. The goal is to ensure that benefits effectively address the unique financial challenges disabled veterans face, not just their income level.

In contrast, Kansas currently offers very limited property tax rebate (Maximum refund of \$700), which is not be enough to deter the out-migration of veterans and their families. Veterans, with their unique skills and contributions, are invaluable to our communities. Losing them to other states not only depletes our valuable human resources but also affects the overall economic and social fabric of our communities. Let alone how many are disqualified due to the in place income and property value limitations.

By passing HB2036, Kansas can position itself as a state that truly values and supports its veterans. This legislation will send a strong message that Kansas acknowledges the service and sacrifice of its veterans and is committed to providing them with the support they deserve.

Moreover, the bill aligns with economic development strategies by making the state a more attractive destination for veterans, who often bring diverse experiences and skills that enrich our workforce and society. The absence of income and property value limits in the exemption allows for a broader and more inclusive benefit, catering to veterans from all walks of life.

KSDVL urges the committee to consider the long-term benefits of HB2036. This bill is a pivotal step towards creating a more inclusive, supportive, and economically competitive Kansas. It's an opportunity to show that we are a state that not only appreciates the sacrifices of our veterans but also actively works towards improving their quality of life.

**We, the disabled Veterans of Kansas, hope for your favorable decision on House Bill 2036.**

States That offer Property Tax Exemption [Here](#)

18 States that offer Total Exemption [Here](#)

Disabled Veterans in Kansas priced out of home with rising property taxes [Here](#)

"My house is not, it's not big, it's a little bitty house," said Vietnam veteran Dave Lefevere. "It's just me and my dogs."

His property valuation from the county went up this year. That drove up his property tax, slowly making his home more expensive to keep.

"I worry about it all the time," said Lefevere. "I can't really do a job 'cause I've had three strokes, and I don't really have any balance."

Another Vietnam veteran, Louis Bernardo, has lived in his Wichita home for three decades.

"We're getting ready to pay it off, but I don't know if I'm gonna be able to do that," said Bernardo. "I may have to sell."

He's facing the same dilemma as Lefevere. Bernardo's property value is up, and so is his property tax.

"It's getting harder and harder because I don't know how I'm gonna do this and make all the ends meet," Bernardo said. -[KSN.com](#)

<https://www.kake.com/story/50293942/kansas-is-the-8th-most-moved-from-state-study-says>  
<https://usafacts.org/topics/veterans/state/kansas/>

[https://www.cbo.gov/publication/59836#\\_idTextAnchor041](https://www.cbo.gov/publication/59836#_idTextAnchor041)

<https://www.communitytax.com/tax-blog/veteran-tax-exemptions/>

<https://vaclaimsinsider.com/property-tax-exemption-for-100-disabled-veterans/>

<https://www.ksnt.com/news/kansas/kansas-veteran-says-hes-being-priced-out-of-home-due-to-property-value-increase/amp/>

<https://www.ksn.com/news/local/property-taxes-could-be-fully-refunded-for-some-wichitans-next-year/>