

Governor's Military Council

House Standing Committee on Education Budget
Testimony on HB 2439
(Relating to the Counting of certain military pupils)
January 31, 2012

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, I'm John Armbrust, Executive Director of the Governor's Military. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2439.

Secretary of Defense Panetta held a press conference last Thursday, January 26th, to discuss \$259B of DoD budget reductions over the next five years. These reductions are the first installment of reductions that will total at least \$487B over a 10 year period. In his press conference he noted that no state will be untouched during this defense downsizing process. Mr. Panetta also announced that the President will be requesting Congress to authorize another round of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC).

These budget reductions and the possibility of another round of BRAC, when coupled with the fiscal and economic impact of military activity in the state of Kansas, make it clear that Kansas should continue to take all actions possible which show Kansas is a military friendly state. Passage of HB 2439 is a key step in that direction.

The fiscal and economic impact I referenced is based on a study completed by Wichita State University several years ago. This study showed that military activities in Kansas contribute about \$7.5B per year to the state's Gross State Product and employ approximately 169,000 Kansans. These Kansans receive wages totaling over \$5.5B per year. Additionally, over \$395M in property and income taxes are paid to the state as a result of military activities in Kansas.

In the Pentagon and in many forums around the United States, Kansas' past support of a second count date has been noted. This nationwide attention plus the reasons articulated above demonstrate the importance of supporting and passing out of Committee HB 2439.

That said, there is another reason I support passage of this bill out of Committee. While the growth of the military due to BRAC 2005 is now over, the resulting growth in the communities and their school districts is far from over. As deployments decrease and time on station increases, we fully expect more families will begin to accompany their military member to Kansas for the foreseeable future. Growth of military students in our schools is expected along side this growth in families. HB 2439 allows the school districts to ensure they can handle the student increases in a way that ensures all students get a quality education in Kansas, regardless of when they arrive.

In summary, I believe there are several reasons why passage of HB 2439 is important and deserves your full support, plus it simply is the right thing to do.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2439.