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To: House Education Committee
From: Patrick Vogelsberg
Date: February 12th, 2019
Subject: Proponent Testimony on HB 2144

Honorable Chairman Huebert and members of the House Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on behalf of the Kansas Association of REALTORS® (KAR) in support of HB 2144, sections 1 and 8.

KAR represents nearly 10,000 members involved in residential, commercial and agricultural real estate and has advocated on behalf of the state's property owners for over 95 years. REALTORS® serve an important role in the state's economy and are dedicated to working with our elected officials to create better communities by supporting economic development, a high quality of life and providing affordable housing opportunities while protecting the rights of private property owners.

HB 2144 brings up significant issues for KAR regarding finance of our public education institutions and the revenue needed to support and maintain them. The 2019 KAR Legislative Policy Statement provides:

As REALTORS®, we realize the importance of quality public schools to the local real estate market. The quality of education in our schools has proven to be a driving force in the growth or demise of our residential and business communities. It is these communities, not merely the homes within them, which are bought and sold. As such, REALTORS® support responsible funding for public schools.

KAR members are involved in recruiting new residents to our local communities on a daily basis and realize the importance of quality public schools in building a high quality of life for Kansas residents. We also believe in the importance of a low tax burden on Kansas businesses and families that will help keep our state competitive in the search for new economic development and job growth opportunities.

Again the 2019 KAR Legislative Policy Statement provides:

REALTORS® believe that real estate is burdened with an excessive share of the constantly increasing cost of state and local government. While we realize the importance of many programs funded through property tax revenues, we believe tax revenues should be equitably collected from a variety of sources and encourage taxing jurisdictions to consider the negative impact to the housing market associated with any potential increase in property tax rates.

Furthermore, REALTORS® support policies that give citizens a greater voice in decisions impacting their tax burden. As such, government leaders should put calls for increases in revenue to a public vote.

Sections 1 and 8 of HB 2144 would give voters the ability to place on the ballot certain community college construction projects and budget increases. It should be noted that in neither situation the public vote would be automatic. Instead, a successful protest petition would need to be conducted.

Protest petitions are burdensome and difficult to organize. Therefore, we envision that a successful community college protest petition would be a rare occurrence. However, without this opportunity to object, a taxpayer's only remedy is to wait for the next trustee election (or seek ouster). By that time, some of the decisions made and obligations committed to cannot be rescinded by new trustees.

If an automatic public vote is not desired by the committee, a protest petition option is a good alternative. Opportunity for a protest petition, as HB 2144 provides, is a good public policy that justifiably limits the property tax burden on Kansas property owners without their acquiescence or express approval.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick Vogelsberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patrick Vogelsberg
Vice President of Governmental Affairs
Kansas Association of REALTORS®