



February 17, 2025

Testimony in support of HB 2372

Chairman Kessler, members of the committee,

Thank you for your consideration of designating Lincoln Park the official location of the State Firefighter Memorial. The Wichita Firefighter Memorial, situated in Lincoln Park, is located in my district, just outside our Firefighter Museum, former Fire Station 1. It is one of the points of pride in my district, where we honor not only the brave men and women who have died protecting us and our families in Wichita, but all those lost from around the state. Every fall, we host a moving ceremony where the names of every firefighter who has died in the line of duty in Kansas history are read aloud. Flags are lowered, a solemn bell is rung, and color guards from departments across the state salute. Their names are etched on the wall of remembrance. We have been committed to recognizing and honoring their legacy for years, and I couldn't think of a more appropriate place to serve as the official memorial.

One point I would ask for you to consider is giving Wichita representation an appropriate number of seats on the governing board. We have maintained and cared for the memorial for years, mostly through the efforts of the Museums volunteers and retired firefighters, and will be around the memorial, understanding the maintenance needs and gathering feedback from the visitors. We understand it should reflect the broader thoughts and opinions from across the state, but also feel the institutional knowledge and dedication of those who have been caring for the memorial is a valuable resource that should be retained.

Thank you again for this consideration. Regardless of how this legislation turns out, I invite you to attend this year to join us in honoring and celebrating the lives of those who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our community.

Mike Hoheisel, Wichita City Council, District 3