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### Testimony in Support of SB 7

Chairman Bergquist and Members of the Committee on Local Government:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of SB 7. We represent northern Shawnee County in the Legislature and have been asked by the Board of Soldier Township to amend limitations placed on townships when issuing bonds for buildings and fire stations.

Soldier Township is the largest township in Kansas with more than 15,000 residents that do not receive basic services from a city. The township actively maintains 125 miles of paved roads and provides essential ambulance services. Additionally, the township has provided fire services since 1937. The township has purchased land to build a new fire station to accommodate population growth and the larger size of today's equipment, but the statutory limitations on bonds issued by townships prevents Soldier Township from constructing a new fire station.

The limitations on townships are set by K.S.A. 80-1909 and 1910 which date to 1939 and K.S.A. 80-113 which dates to 1949. These statutes limit Soldier Township to a bond limit of \$2.19 million or 1.5% of assessed valuation. Officials estimate the cost of a new fire station to be between \$8 and \$12 million. Comparable entities that provide fire service have much higher limits, such as 5% of assessed valuation for fire districts, 30% for cities, and 3% for counties. Given the similar nature of services and tax base between these entities and the increase in construction costs since just 2020, it seems reasonable to raise the limits placed on townships after 85 years.

In order to ensure townships do not exceed a responsible amount of bonds, we have structured this bill to allow the bonding limit to increase based on population of the township and assessed valuation, with an additional 5% allowed for fire stations. In addition to the population and assessed valuation limitations, no bonds may be issued unless they are approved in a public election. We believe the bonding limitations should be updated so that the residents of Soldier Township may determine for themselves if the board should move forward with the new fire station.

Senator Kenny Titus  
District 18

Representative Kyle McNorton  
District 50