



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation  
In Support of SB442  
Joseph Sharbaugh  
HealthRidge Fitness Center  
March 9, 2012**

Chairman Donovan and Senators of the Committee: HealthRidge Fitness Center is located in Olathe. HealthRidge supports the passage of SB442 as amended. We believe this bill should be passed for several reasons.

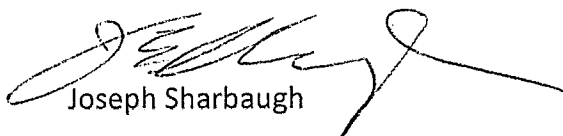
First we believe the bill encourages the wellness of Kansans. Good health and exercise go hand in hand. While exercise may not guarantee good health; it certainly is a major component in it. Overweight and obesity are major factors in diabetes and heart disease. Several studies have shown that those who exercise regularly have a greater opportunity to fight being overweight. Lowering fixed costs to Kansas clubs will provide the opportunity for clubs to lower membership rates and provide additional services. Both of these will contribute to the fight on obesity.

HealthRidge also believes this is a fairness and equity issue. Within ten minutes of our club is a facility that is very similar to ours that pays no property tax. They collect membership dues just like we do, they provide fitness facilities like we do, and compete directly against us. The City of Olathe is now planning a fitness type facility that will be paid by tax dollars, compete directly against our facility, and pay no property taxes. If the names of these facilities were removed one could not tell the difference between our facility and these. This bill will correct this injustice that exists.

Finally this bill could actually result in additional revenues for the State of Kansas. Many studies have shown that those who regularly exercise have lower absenteeism at work. This will result in less lost time and higher wages for these employees. Since these wages are taxable the State enjoys a benefit. New studies are also beginning to show that those involved in regular exercise spend less on medical services. If indeed this is true this will result in more disposable income that will generate additional sales tax for the State.

HealthRidge Fitness Center joins other Kansas clubs in encouraging the Committee to pass SB442. We believe that is a vote for fairness, a vote for healthiness and will ultimately result in added revenues for the State. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph Sharbaugh

Sn. Assmnt & Tax  
3-13-12