

State of Kansas – **Senate Committee on Local Government**

Testimony: Dr. Pat Landes, Mayor of Junction City

Hearing: February 20, 2012, Room 159-S

Mr. Chairmen and Members of the Local Government Committee,

Good afternoon! My name is Pat Landes and I am the very proud mayor of Junction City. I was elected to the commission this past April and installed as mayor my first night. My family has lived in Junction City since 1997. I am a Diagnostic Radiologist at Geary Community Hospital in Junction City. Like many people in our town when the building boom was going on, I was busy raising a family and volunteering in different civic organizations before running for the commission. I was greatly concerned about the rapid growth and the direction our community was heading. Junction City residents have sacrificed a great deal as stated by Ms. Beatty and Mr. Vernon. We have learned many valuable lessons when dealing with the rapid expansion of the adjacent military installation. However our community has also been enriched by the soldiers and their families that have come from all over the country and have chosen to live in Junction City.

Within the last two years, we have a new city manager, and added a chief financial officer and an assistant city manager. We also had three new commissioners elected this past Spring. Our administrative staff began working with Columbia Capitol Management to develop a plan to resurrect our community from its financial difficulties. As stated, our financial position is stronger than a year ago but we will need more

time to complete to complete our fiscal transformation. In 2010, our citizens bravely voted for a one-cent sales tax increase specifically to be used for debt service. The administrative staff has re-evaluated fees throughout all our governmental departments. We are also in the process of taking back the public works department which had previously been contracted out.

The 2012 year represents the worst year of our debt payments. During the budget process last summer, some jobs were eliminated, departmental budgets were slashed and yet we had to raise the mill levy by approximately 2 mils. It was one of the most difficult experiences that I have faced although it is probably quite common for you.

Our financial situation is improving and we continue to sell approximately 125 new homes each year which is probably more than most towns that are our size in the state. Junction City was asked to meet the housing challenge for our military and that has been accomplished. The spending spree is over and we now have an excellent staff in place to carry us forward. We would greatly appreciate your assistance in granting the extension. Thank you!

Pat Landes, DO

Mayor of Junction City