

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairman Johnson and Members of the House Taxation Committee
FROM: Ronald Ellis, 47th District Representative
DATE: 1 February 2018
SUBJECT: HB 2500 Jefferson County Friends of Hospice

I come today to discuss a bill to provide sales tax exemption for the Friends of Hospice of Jefferson County.

Friends of Hospice is a support organization for the Jefferson County Hospice Agency. As a 501 (c) (3), the organization is currently exempt from federal income taxation.

Friends of Hospice assists in paying bills for dying patients without insurance coverage, with very little insurance coverage, or with high copayments and deductibles. They also pay copayments for medications for pain relief and symptom control and for respite care. They provide incontinence supplies, wipes, and gloves when not covered by the hospice benefit. Friends of Hospice pays a portion of the social worker's salary for the Hospice Agency. The organization supports a robust volunteer program that provides companion services to Hospice patients including sitting with and talking with patients as indicated, reading aloud, writing letters, and running errands for family members. They support the ongoing education for Hospice nurses and staff including conference attendance registration, travel, and lodging. The organization pays the dues for the Kansas Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. Friends of Hospice pays for books, cards, and educational materials for patients' families; the organization provides on-going support for the family for one year after the patient has passed. All this is done to benefit Jefferson County Hospice patients in the hopes they receive the best end-of-life care possible.

The organization's annual fundraiser, called the Taste of Elegance, is comprised of a donated meal, a silent auction, and a live auction. This county-wide event is supported by local 4-H clubs who serve tables, churches and business owners who prepare and donate food, and various community leaders who serve the meal and donate auction items. The event has widespread support with about 1,000 people attending each year.

However, these community efforts to benefit hospice patients are charged an average of \$3,800 per year in state taxes.

If a state sales tax exemption is provided to Friends of Hospice of Jefferson County, we believe additional monies and support can be directed to patients during the end-of-life process.

Thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of this wonderful organization.