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To: House Taxation Committee
From: Mark Tomb, VP of Governmental Affairs
Date: March 12, 2020

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 294

Honorable Chairman Johnson and members of the House Taxation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on behalf of the Kansas Association of REALTORS® in support of SB 294. This legislation produces a more honest calculation of property taxes by factoring valuation changes in the setting of tax rates. In addition, SB 294 brings added transparency and accountability to the state's property tax system by requiring city and county elected officials to provide public notice, hold a public hearing and vote when the amount of property taxes received is increased.

The Kansas Association of REALTORS® represents over 10,000 members involved in residential, agricultural and commercial real estate and has advocated on behalf of the state's property owners for nearly 100 years. REALTORS® serve an important role in the state's economy and are dedicated to working with our elected officials to create better communities by supporting economic development, a high quality of life and providing affordable housing opportunities while protecting the rights of private property owners.

REALTORS® maintain that every citizen should have the right to acquire real property with the confidence and certainty that the value of such property will not be unreasonably diminished by governmental action, including excessive taxation. REALTORS® believe that real estate is burdened with an excessive share of the constantly increasing cost of state and local government. While we realize the importance of many programs funded through property tax revenues, we believe tax revenues should be equitably collected from a variety of sources and encourage taxing jurisdictions to consider the negative impact to the housing market associated with any potential increase in property tax rates. Accordingly, we urge local and state governments to take immediate steps to eliminate redundant and duplicative programs and services, eliminate wasteful spending and reduce the increasing burden of state and local taxation.

REALTORS® have been among the most vocal supporters of placing limits on property tax increases in recent years. Because of rather large property tax lid exceptions, these efforts have not been successful at reducing the growth of property taxes across the state. We are optimistic that the truth in taxation concept will be more effective at educating property taxpayers while ultimately reducing their property tax burden.

In closing, the Kansas Association of REALTORS® would like to highlight that this legislation puts in place a more honest way for actual property tax increases to be collected and utilized. We would respectfully request that the House Taxation Committee act favorably on SB 294. Thank you for the opportunity to provide the committee with comments regarding SB 294. I am happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.