



**Kansas Hospital**  
ASSOCIATION

TO: Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

FROM: Chad Austin  
Senior Vice President, Government Relations

DATE: February 19, 2019

RE: Senate Bill 125 and Senate Bill 135

The Kansas Hospital Association appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of both Senate Bill 125 and Senate Bill 135. Senate Bill 125 extends by five years the statutory sunset of the rural opportunity zones program and Senate Bill 135 adds Atchison, Cowley, Crawford, Dickinson, Franklin, and Pottawatomie counties to the list of eligible counties in the rural opportunity zone program. KHA believes both of these bills would continue to assist in the recruitment of health care providers to many of our rural communities.

Kansas continues to face a shortage of the individuals most important to a strong healthcare system — physicians, nurses and other allied practitioners. According to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, over 90 Kansas counties have a designation as a primary care health professional shortage area. Accordingly, hospitals from all parts of the state continually report difficulty in recruiting and retaining physicians and other health care professionals. The aforementioned bills would continue to complement the workforce recruitment efforts already underway in our state by providing additional incentives through income tax rebates and student loan forgiveness for those individuals relocating from out of state.

The success of the Kansas health care system in rural areas depends upon the availability of properly educated and trained health care professionals. The Kansas Hospital Association and its members request your support for Senate Bill 125 and Senate Bill 135. We would also encourage the committee to consider adding Ford County to the list of eligible counties that may participate in the rural opportunity zone program.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.