



January 26, 2021

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Wichita Chamber and our over 1,500 members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of S.B. 13, AN ACT concerning property taxation; relating to tax levy rates, establishing notice and public hearing requirements prior to approval by a governing body to exceed its revenue neutral rate and discontinuing the city and county tax lid; prohibiting valuation increase of real property solely as the result of normal repair, replacement or maintenance; establishment of a payment plan for the payment of delinquent or nondelinquent taxes; amending K.S.A. 79-1460, 79-1801, 79-2024 and 79-2925c and repealing the existing sections.

The Wichita Chamber stands in strong support of S.B. 13 as we believe it is a positive step towards increasing transparency and taxpayer understanding of property taxes. The information currently received by Kansas property taxpayers is confusing and not helpful in understanding some of the most critical questions about why tax amounts owed are what they are and where a taxpayer's money goes. Nor are they very helpful in understanding why if my local elected officials haven't raised my taxes, I end paying more year after year.

As demonstrated in Utah and Tennessee, legislation similar to S.B. 13 pulls the curtain back for individuals and businesses paying property taxes. We believe that transparency at every government level and in almost every government activity is a good thing. It is especially critical for those elected and entrusted to receive and spend the money that belongs to the citizens.

The Chamber wants to be clear, we support and appreciate our partners in local government. Local units of government provide critically important services essential to the success of communities and our overall economy. We want well-maintained infrastructure, safe communities, and growing local economies. These are all things in which local government plays a key role. We believe that S.B. 13 strikes a fair and appropriate balance in government transparency and accountability while also allowing local governments to make the necessary taxing and budgeting decisions necessary to successfully carry out their missions on behalf of those they serve.

With this in mind, we respectfully request that the Committee report S.B. 13 favorable for passage.

Thank you, and I am happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Jason P. Watkins  
Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce