

STATE OF KANSAS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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**CHRISTOPHER D. CROFT**  
8TH DISTRICT

February 16, 2021

House Committee on Veterans and Military  
Kansas State Capitol  
300 SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Chairman Clarke and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for HB2020.

After the 2019 session I organized a strategic planning event for the veteran community. Twenty-seven (27) veteran service organizations (VSOs) from around the state met here in the Capitol. We brought in facilitators and set up sessions to help the VSOs establish a unified priority list. The Governor's office, several state agencies and other legislators attended the session as well. After a full day of activities, the facilitators presented the top 5 items and the group approved. By far, the #1 item was a Veteran's Home in Northeast (NE) Kansas.

The other priority items included:

- Property Tax relief
- Toll road exemption for disabled veterans
- Occupational Licensing
- In-state tuition for Children and Spouses of military members / veterans regardless of state of residence

What are our neighbor states doing in regards to Veteran Homes?

State	# Veterans	% of Adults	# Veteran Homes
Colorado	367,292	8.2%	5
Kansas	165,033	7.5%	2
Missouri	382,548	8.1%	7
Nebraska	112,177	7.7%	4
Oklahoma	261,559	8.8%	7

\* Based on Statista Research Department published Jan 20, 2021, <https://veteransaidbenefit.org>

I have personally spoken with Governor Kelly about the need for a Veteran's Home in NE Kansas. She stated to me personally that she supported a Veteran's Home in NE Kansas but she had some concerns about utilization. We do have many existing Veteran Home beds located in both locations that are unused. There are several factors for this that the Director of the Commission on Veterans Affairs will most likely address.

The two Kansas Veteran Homes are in Fort Dodge and Fort Scott areas. Both homes are more than a six hour round trip from the NE region. Making it extremely difficult to support the veteran in the facility.

I also spoke on several occasions to Senator Moran and his team on this subject and they expressed support.

I want to thank the committee for their time and for their support of this important legislation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Croft", written in a cursive style.

Chris Croft  
District 8