



**House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development**

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 2544**

**Presented by Eric Stafford, VP of Government Affairs, Kansas Chamber,  
Executive Director, KS Military & Veterans Affairs Council**

**Thursday, January 25, 2024**

Mister Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs for the Kansas Chamber. The Kansas Chamber represents small, medium and large-sized businesses across the state, advocating for policies which improve the economic climate in Kansas. We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2544, which provides an employment tax credit for members of the Army and Air National Guard, similar to the aerospace engineering tax credit passed by the legislature in 2022.

In 2023, the Kansas Chamber launched our Military and Veterans Affairs Council. The mission of the Military and Veterans Affairs council is to provide a unified voice to support and grow our state's military institutions and to build stronger relationships between the servicemember and employer communities. When the concept of HB 2544 was brought forward to our council, we knew this would be a valuable tool and great opportunity for the state to incentivize not only the employment of our national guard servicemembers, but also to incentivize those individuals to choose Kansas as their home and fits within the mission of supporting both the military and business community.

HB 2544 provides a tax credit for both the employer and the national guard member, similar to the aerospace tax credit passed back in 2022. Kansas is very fortunate to be a smaller state with three significant military institutions. As the federal government continues to analyze its military investment strategy, we must ensure that state policies establish a friendly environment for our country's military men and women through policies which ease transition to life in Kansas, whether it be through tax policy or other policies like occupational licensure reciprocity for spouses.

In conclusion, we respectfully ask that you support House Bill 2544 as a way to improve the state's climate for our national guard members.

