



**Unified Government of
Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas**

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**Senate Bill 196
Oral Testimony in Support
Commissioner Christian Ramirez
On behalf of the
Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas**

**Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee
January 11, 2024**

Good morning Chairwoman Tyson and Members of the Committee:

I am Christian Ramirez, Commissioner for the District 3 of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas (“the UG”), and I am pleased to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 196. I first want to recognize and thank Senator Jeff Pittman, who represents a portion of Wyandotte County, for introducing this bill and I want to thank Chairwoman Tyson for hearing this bill early in the 2024 session.

The UG is the only consolidated city/county government in the State of Kansas. The resumption of Local Ad Valorem Tax Reduction Fund (LAVTRF) transfers would bring much needed property tax relief to the citizens of Wyandotte County, as well as all Kansas property owners.

I stood for re-election this past fall and this gave me the opportunity to hear from many of my constituents. I will tell you that the issue of property taxes and rising valuations is perhaps the most significant concern that Wyandotte Countians have right now. Many of our citizens, like others across Kansas, have seen double digit valuation increases. Some of these people are truly worried that they cannot afford to stay in their homes.

The UG greatly welcomes the Kansas Legislature's interest in providing meaningful property tax relief to Kansans. I know that you may be discussing a number of different measures that are targeted at helping property owners (which in turn can extend to renters). While the UG is very mindful that we have to do our part to hold the line on rising property taxes, we want to partner with the State in this endeavor.

As you are well aware, the Local Ad Valorem Tax Reduction Fund (LAVTRF) has not been funded by the Legislature in quite some time. With the state's current budget surplus, we believe this is the right time to resume LAVTRF transfers. We are well aware of the concerns that some legislators have about ensuring that local units of government use these dollars for property tax relief and not for other government expenses. The UG is mindful of these concerns and welcomes any dialogue you want to have about making sure that these funds go for their intended purpose. I certainly will be a steadfast advocate before our Commission in ensuring that LAVTRF transfers go directly to the taxpayers of Wyandotte County.

On behalf of the UG, I thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony and we ask for your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 196.