

***From the desk of
Governor Jeff Colyer, M.D.***

17 June 2024

Mr. Chairman,

I submit my testimony to show the strong bipartisan support that exists across Kansas. As a fifth generation Kansan from Hays, a conservative, a former legislator from Johnson County, and a former governor, this is a unique situation.

Once a century or so an opportunity will present itself that can transform the perception of our state.

We all know Kansas is not flyover country. It is the true heart of America, and we all know Kansas should be the best place to have a business and raise a family. For too long New York and Hollywood have looked down their noses at us.

This is the chance to show our true colors.

Football is not just a game; it is an economic engine that creates jobs, fosters community spirit, and even improves our tax revenue. Moving the Chiefs to Kansas would be a boon for our economy, generating substantial economic activity and putting Kansas on the map as a premier sports destination. The same is true for the Royals.

My fondest memories as a kid from Hays was going to a Chiefs or Royals game with my Dad. In full disclosure I've been a season ticket holder for 20 years, and I want my daughters and future grandchildren to have the same.

Missouri has spoken. Their plan was to raise taxes on everyone across Kansas City to maintain an old open air stadium, and make taxpayers take the risk for 40 years. Missouri voters didn't buy it.

I remember a late night conversation with a political leader from another state awhile back. He asked if I thought the Royals would stay in Kansas City because his state would “make them an offer they couldn’t refuse.” We shouldn’t kid ourselves. Many states will do their best to get both teams to move. The fact Kansas has a unique mechanism to retain them without taking money from the general fund is a service to our region.

The Kansas opportunity is different. Star Bonds were designed precisely for this scenario. They brought us NASCAR and revitalized Wyandotte county businesses. A new home for the Chiefs will see all sorts of new businesses grow up around the stadium. Those businesses would never exist in Kansas without the Chiefs. So they and the Chiefs produce new sales tax which would be used to finance bonds for the stadium—not existing Kansas taxpayers. Once the bonds are paid off all that revenue goes to the state. Plus we get new income and property tax to finance schools and roads.

As Governor, it was always hard to get investors to look at us because their preexisting impression of Kansas wasn’t based on seeing us on the national stage. Kansas rarely had that opportunity.

A new domed stadium in Kansas not only brings the Chiefs, it also means a Super Bowl, Final Fours, World Cup, Luke Combs and Taylor Swift concerts (and their sales and income taxes). Most importantly, every time the world will be reminded that Kansas is a happening place. That opens the door for other opportunities as well.

One cannot overlook the practical and public health benefits of a new domed stadium in Kansas. I’ve taken care of Chiefs fans with frostbite, and that should never happen. Such a facility would not only enhance the fan experience but as a doctor, I bet it would add a few more years to Patrick Mahomes career.

This is our chance. Our opportunity to show the country, and the world, who we are. By bringing the Chiefs to Kansas, we can elevate our state's profile, attract investment, and inspire pride among our residents. It is a bold move, but one that is

necessary to secure a prosperous future.