



Kansas State Firefighters Association, Inc.

Dedicated to the Safety and Education of the Kansas Fire Service

**Written Only Testimony in Support of HB2066
House Committee on Taxation
February 2, 2023**

Good afternoon Chairman Smith and members of the House Taxation Committee. My name is Steve Hirsch and I serve as the President of the Kansas State Firefighters Association. Our association represents approximately 16,000 firefighters in Kansas, in both career and volunteer capacities.

The Association would like to express support for the passage of HB2066. This bill would provide a property tax exemption for up to two motor vehicles for firefighters and other emergency medical service providers.

Workforce issues have become a growing concern for our member fire service providers. As underemployment and rising wages are a reality across the state, the impacts are particularly evident in highly demanding workforces, and most adversely impact our volunteer members. These staffing shortages are most concerning in rural areas, particularly in Western Kansas, where wildfire prevention and response is an on-going focus.

This bill would provide an incentive to attract new recruits, and serve as a much-needed retention bonus for existing firefighters, who are facing the realities of inflation and increased cost of living.

Firefighters across our state answer the call to provide life-saving fire and EMS services. HB2066 would give the most basic of incentive, providing financial relief to recruit and retain these local heroes. I ask that the Committee favorably advance HB2066, to provide needed relief to our first responders in these difficult times.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before your Committee, and am happy to answer any questions.

Steve Hirsch,

President, Kansas State Firefighters Association