

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AND MILITARY

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 2378
February 14, 2023**

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Deputy Director, Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs**

Mr. Chairman, Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding HB 2378.

In March 2021 the Governor signed Executive Order No. 21-07, directing the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office (KCVAO) to submit an initial application to the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) State Veterans Home construction grant program to fund a Northeast Kansas Veterans Home. House Bill 2021 authorized financing relating to the construction of a Northeast Kansas Veterans home facility in the amount of 10.5 million dollars. That amount was increased to 17.2 million in the 2022 session.

In April 2022, our agency submitted the preapplication packet to the VA and in July 2022 we submitted the final developed application to the state Veterans home construction grant program with the Kansas commitment of 17.2 million dollars attached.

A nine-member advisory committee reviewed the applications for the new home and narrowed the list to two locations. A three-person site selection panel determined the preferred site based on all the data provided. Early January 2023, the Governor ultimately announced the new Northeast Kansas Veterans Home would be built in Topeka on the plot of land described in this bill near the Colmery O'neil VA Medical Center on the Kansas Neurological Institute campus.

As such, we support this legislation to transfer the parcel of land from the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services to the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office.

This land transfer is being accomplished to maintain the flexibility required to continue to meet the architectural designs and make modifications to the plan as needed. The site also allows us to pursue future growth if needed. I will stand for questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Rohleder
Deputy Director
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