



House Committee on Welfare Reform
Oral Testimony in Support of HB 2723
March 5, 2024

Chairman Averkamp and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Chamber of Lawrence, please accept this written testimony in support of HB 2723, which would create a grant fund that would be administered by Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) to create homeless shelter infrastructure and a program to administer the funding and contracts.

The Lawrence Chamber supports policies that appropriately address mental health, homelessness, and substance abuse as issues that affect our region and employees.

This addresses downstream consequences of other factors. Mental health and addiction support as well as addressing the underlying causes of poverty are also important for a complete look at the issues. Without simultaneous and adequate upstream capacity the needs for emergency shelter will grow.

Funding for physical facilities and infrastructure is only one part. Staffing for these shelters as well as the wrap around supports noted in the bill are perhaps more expensive and should be allowed in the funding requests or be supported with additional funding.

This will also assist communities to serve this population where they are located and have personal support, such as family in the area. It will also assist communities to have the funds to avoid the transfer of individuals to other areas that may presently have resources committed to homelessness.

We urge you to support this proposed legislation and the positive impacts this tool can provide for the State of Kansas.

Respectfully,

Bonnie Lowe, IOM
President/CEO