

Testimony to the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee on SB 101

Julie Govert Walter, Executive Director
North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging, Inc.

Thank you, Chair Tyson and Committee Members,

The North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging (NC-FH AAA) serves more than 67,000 older Kansans and their caregivers in 18-counties in the heartland of Kansas and also serves as one of Kansas' Aging and Disability Resource Centers. This population—and the demand for important services –will grow in the future. Our non-profit Agency—one of 11 Area Agencies on Aging—is based in Manhattan and has offices in Salina and Emporia.

Our Agency's mission centers on providing and coordinating services that help older Kansans maintain their dignity, health and well-being to enable them to live in their homes and be contributing members of their communities. Like all Kansas Area Agencies on Aging, almost all funding for services that we provide to older Kansans, people living with disabilities and caregivers comes from tax dollars—federal, state and local taxpayer sources. About 98 percent of our funding for services comes from these public sources.

Among the services our Agency provides to older Kansans, people living with disabilities and caregivers:

- * Assessment and service coordination for older Kansans and people with disabilities who need in-home services and help to maintain their well-being in their homes and support to caregivers.
- * Help people of all ages who seek unbiased counseling and trustworthy information on Medicare and health insurance options.
- * Seminars and trainings-- remote and in-person-- providing trustworthy and useful information and answers including Durable Power of Attorney, end-of-life decisions and other legal matters.
- * Information from experts on options to Kansans of all ages when health declines or disability occurs.
- * Friendship Meals available to older Kansans at 38 locations in our region
- * Help to job-seekers over 55 and matching older job-seekers with employers
- * Region-wide HUD rental subsidy to low-income Kansans
- * One-on-One counseling and referrals to other helping organizations to hundreds of people

Currently, only our direct expenditure of food costs under our Friendship Meals program is exempt from sales tax. Other expenses essential for carrying out our wider service mission are not exempt from state sales tax. These include supplies for those needing in-home services including dentures, hearing aids and home repairs; office supplies; vehicles and vehicle repair, computers and technology support, building upgrades and repair and more. Like the other seven non-government organization (NGO) Area Agencies on Aging, our agency pays sales taxes on these expenditures.

Our Agency takes our role as stewards of taxpayer monies seriously. We are cost-conscious and frugal. If we were exempt from state sales tax, about \$35,000 more would be available next year to address service needs for older people and individuals living with disabilities in our region. The fiscal note for this bill reflects the amount of monies that our Agency--and the seven other non-profit Area Agencies on Aging—currently must forfeit each year to pay sales taxes—monies that should be used to meet service needs of the people we serve in our respective regions.

This legislation has been a priority of our state association for years. Passage will help sustain programs and services for your older constituents, people living with disabilities and their caregivers statewide. Your support for SB 101 is truly appreciated. Thank you. ~ Julie Govert Walter



**North Central-Flint Hills
AREA AGENCY ON AGING, Inc.**

401 Houston St.
Manhattan, KS 66502
1-800-432-2703 or 785-776-9294
www.ncfhaaa.com