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Date: January 9, 2024  
To: Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation, Chair Senator Tyson  
From: Daron Hall, City Manager, Pittsburg  
Re: SB 196 – Written Support Testimony

Thank you, Chairwoman and Committee, for allowing me to submit testimony in support of SB 196. The City is currently in support of this legislation as an alternative to increasing local property taxes.

All leaders in the State recognize that in order for Kansas to avoid decline, the trend of population loss must be reversed, and they also recognize that to do this, essential services must be funded and property taxes must be controlled. As a leader in a border community, this is particularly clear to me.

The last State General Fund transfer to the LAVTRF occurred in FY 2003 and transfers have routinely been suspended in appropriations bills. The hundreds of millions not transferred to Kansas communities for the past twenty years has caused local taxpayers to bear the burden of providing basic services, and local elected officials are forced to either increase property taxes, or to eliminate programs and services for public safety, infrastructure and recreation.

The loss of population in Kansas is not a result of a lack of opportunity – unemployment is historically low. The exodus can be traced to a failure to create a desirable quality of life. As both the State and our communities try to retain our residents and attract new ones, cutting the services they receive is counter-productive. Instead we should work together during this prosperous time to fight back against decline and reinstate this tool which was designed to do exactly what we need - provide local property tax relief to residents without limiting growth in our communities.

Other efforts to control property tax growth have been ineffective due to exemptions or have been counter-productive by penalizing communities who are growing due to their hard work. Let's not create more barriers to growth. Let's reinstate the LAVTR, get the money to the communities who need it, and send a clear message to our families and businesses that Kansas will provide communities that retain and attract the talent and families it needs to prosper. Let's continue to grow together.

For these reasons, I ask the Committee to pass SB 196 out of committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Daron Hall  
City Manager, Pittsburg