



# **BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ATCHISON COUNTY**

423 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Atchison, Kansas 66002-1861  
Telephone: 913-804-6030  
Fax No. 913-367-0227

Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee  
January 11, 2024  
SB 196  
Atchison County, KS Proponent Testimony

Dear Chairwoman Tyson and members of Assessment and Taxation Committee:

Thank you all so much for the wonderful job you do in looking out for our Kansas constituents. It is appreciated that you strive for transparency to the taxpayers. As a county commissioner in Atchison where I was born and raised and love the people, I also strive to work hard and provide transparency to everyone in every way possible. Serving my constituents is my passion, and because of that I am excited to have the opportunity to submit my first committee testimony to you.

I am submitting this letter in favor of SB 196. After reading, listening, and educating myself on the positive impact this would have in Atchison County by restoring approximately \$280,684 from the Local Ad Valorem Tax Reduction (LAVTR) fund I wanted to thank you for allowing this testimony for consideration.

I know you've heard that this funding mechanism will benefit counties because it will decrease property taxes for local taxpayers, however I want to dig a bit deeper and explain specific challenges we are experiencing in Atchison County and how this additional funding will help us.

Our Emergency Medical Services have seen a significant increase in call volume over the past few years, and our equipment is wearing out faster than our capital improvement plan can sustain. The impact inflation has had on this equipment makes it very difficult to keep things up to date with the dollars available.

Our County Attorney recently had a local attorney move on to a new opportunity, this has presented a real issue for us with our current budget. Over the past couple years, we have seen a rise in child sex crimes, and we must have another qualified attorney to assist in working this number of cases. We are experiencing major struggles in securing an attorney willing to join our team in a rural area. Atchison County is near many urban communities, which creates additional factors to consider. We are seeing a trend of losing potential qualified attorneys to the pay scales offered in these surrounding cities, not to mention seeing an uptick in crime as well. This is a real challenge and although we have identified a handful of solutions they have all shown to greatly exceed our personnel budget.

Our Sheriff has brought to our attention critical needs, including the significant increase in vehicle prices over the last three years, the urgent requirement to replace a 24-year-old HVAC unit at the Sheriff's Office, and the need for equipment upgrades, such as mobile computers for deputies and a fingerprint machine.

The above examples are within our County General budget that affect ad valorem taxes.

I vow as a county commissioner of Atchison County, KS I am doing my due diligence of asking the hard questions to our department heads and fellow elected officials, and ensuring we are spending smart and being frugal with taxpayers' dollars. Over the past few years, we've seen a significant increase in wages, insurance, fuel, road materials, medical equipment, court appointed attorneys, as well as many other essential items. We have also been able to take advantage of very low interest rates at the perfect time to obtain a bond for much needed road repairs countywide. In the past few months our courthouse sustained a lightning strike, which turned into an insurance claim and now KCAMP has increased our premiums an additional estimated \$80,000 for 2024. I would like to show you our ad valorem collection over the past few years and that should demonstrate that although we have faced challenges, we have handled them responsibly and increased as little as possible over the past three years.

Our 2024 budget required 2023 ad valorem taxes of \$11,040,433.

Our 2023 budget required 2022 ad valorem taxes of \$10,080,230.

Our 2022 budget required 2021 ad valorem taxes of \$10,088,230.

Our 2021 budget required 2020 ad valorem taxes of \$9,548,614.

In closing I hope that this testimony has demonstrated to you and your committee that the need for Kansas Counties is very much there. Atchison County would be thrilled to hear your committee supports SB 196 and will allocate the estimated \$280,684 to us to assist with critical needs.

I, Atchison County Commissioner Casey Quinn support SB 196 and would ask that this committee also support it on behalf of Kansas Counties.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to submit my testimony to you. I would love to hear your feedback to ensure I know how to improve my submissions in the future.

I appreciate you for the job you do! Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Casey Quinn  
Chairwoman  
Atchison County Commissioner District #3  
[cquinn@atcoks.org](mailto:cquinn@atcoks.org)  
(913)-370-1193