

House Bill 2036

Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

Chairman and Committee:

Leavenworth Tax Meeting

My name is James Petrik. I am both a resident taxpayer and registered voter in Leavenworth, Ks, I also belong to various Veteran Service Organizations in the local area. I am frustrated with the conflicts between the Tax Committee and the Legislation. There is too much finger pointing and saying who is at fault in trying to provide tax relief for OUR veterans. Now a new comment is made that the burden on the non-veteran property taxpayers is unfair. It was stated the I or we the veterans, are supposed to work and earn more, or we are told and admonished to live within our means. It is difficult to live within our means when the price of everything increases dramatically and now property and vehicle tax go up then we are forced into paying our bills and God forbid that an Emergency happen to pop up.

Everyday my fellow veterans and I are thanked for our service and that our country and state owe us a debt of gratitude. But every day we Veterans are also scoffed at, reminded, and told that "It must be nice to have Veteran Health Care and other benefits". We're made to feel ashamed that we need to utilize these benefits that take away from the nonveteran taxpayer dollars. Now whether the non-veteran taxpayer has made this claim, or it was brought up as a precautionary issue from either the legislation or tax commissioners.

It has been said that we veterans self-certify in getting our disabilities and ratings like getting a fishing license at Wal-Mart. To shed light on this veterans have filled out a multitude of forms as part of our separation process, the forms are distributed to the appropriate agencies and then the veteran is then given orders to report to the nearest VA where they are then evaluated and referred by a third-party health care professional, the results are then submitted to the review board at the VA and the VA's board determines the validity of the malady and determines the rating of the disability. So, this is an official rating and certification vetted by the Department of Veteran Affairs which is an official government entity.

But I wish to make it clear to address all individuals that saying "that it must be nice to have these Veteran Benefits<sup>1</sup>" to the persons that have obtained their college education, Military Science Courses are offered at the Majority

Universities and so college students are afforded the same opportunity to be commissioned officers and serve in the Military like our retired officers, as well as the Military Recruiters offices was and still is opened to all, unless a prospected recruit does not have something personally that can disqualify that person from serving. So, yes, it is nice to have these certain benefits and entitlements. It is not the fact that I could serve, the fact is that I did serve!

I am an employee of the Veterans Administration where I am a Master Procurement and Acquisition manager where I ratify, solicit, and negotiate contracts for good and services that is fair and reasonable and technically acceptable to the government When I was a paramedic I was taught about the “Golden Hour” that was when there was either a Heart Attack or a Stroke it is the first hour to urgently apply life saving measures for optimal survival and recovery. In this setting you have the “Golden Opportunity” you can discuss language, negotiate, and set up your concessions. With collaboration a viable solution can and should be reached.

I was born in Kansas, served our country and returned to Kansas, I am aware of other veteran friendly states, but Kansas is my home, and I don't want to leave due to the inflated amount of taxes and miss out on other benefits that are offered to veterans. Where other veterans get to either live and or work in those and have to relief in paying their taxes.

Instead of identifying this issue and fixing it we veterans are told that we can move somewhere else. I believe what is good for the goose is also good for the gander, if the non-veteran taxpayer does not like the tax incentive to the Kansas Veterans well, they can move where non-veterans are more appreciated and celebrated.

Comment was made that this is a veteran only concession, well it was a group of veterans that both came up and lobbied for this benefit. Some veterans like this and other veterans need this. But after we get this program into action and get it fine-tuned then expand it to other residents. I agree that in a Walgreens Picture perfect world that this benefit should be for all disabled residents and also to be inclusive for our first responding heroes.

James Petrik