



SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 2670
March 12, 2024**

**William (Bill) Turner
Director, Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office**

Mr. Chairmen and Members of the committee,

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of HB 2760.

From 1986 until 2014 our agency was governed by a commission and our agency name was the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs. The mission of the agency was similar to our current mission to assist, educate, and support Veterans and their Eligible Family members with their earned state and federal benefits.

Per KSA 73-1208(d), following the 2014 Legislative session, the commission was abolished and to reflect that change our agency name was changed by adding the word "**Office**" to the name - Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office. As a result of this name change, our mission did not change but the agency continued to grow in our capacity to support Veterans and Family members.

As such, we are no longer governed by a commission and HB2760 would not change our mission to support Veterans. This bill, HB 2760, would only update our name to Kansas Office of Veterans Services.

The agency's goal is to provide information and advocacy to Kansas Veterans and eligible Family members and assist in obtaining all federal and state benefits they have earned. Clarifying our agency's current name will make our agency's purpose more identifiable to Kansas Veterans and other state and Federal stakeholders. We currently report directly to the Governor's Office and are no longer a commission, keeping the word "commission" in the title is unnecessary and confusing to many Veterans. Also, the acronym, KCVAO, is often shortened to KCVA, and easily and often confused with the Kansas City Veterans Administration (KCVA) Medical Center in Missouri.

In doing our research, we reviewed the naming conventions of other state Veterans' affairs agencies and the proposed name change is consistent with the naming of other states. Over 30 other states are "Departments", eight (8) have "Office", 32 have "Veteran Services" and 16 have "Veterans Affairs" in their organization title.

Finally, KCVAO's request to change the agency's name to **Kansas Office of Veterans Services (KOVS)** will make our Veterans Service Representatives and the services we perform more recognizable to Kansas Veterans and their family members. This improved recognition will enable our agency to maximize state and federal benefits and program usage by Veterans, Family members, and other stakeholders to improve their quality of life.

I will stand for questions.

Respectfully submitted,

William (Bill) Turner
Director
Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office