



March 10, 2025

House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee

Oral Proponent Testimony for HB 2346

Presented by: Jeremy McDowell

3/11/2025

Chairman Tarwater and House Commerce committee members,

I am Jeremy McDowell, representing Top Gun Events in support of HB 2346 (with new draft amendment language).

I am the founder and owner of Top Gun Events. As a Kansas born resident and having had a few businesses in the State of Kansas, I am passionate about bringing people together through these events we host. Nothing brings more pride than when we bring people from around the region and even country to host these elite level fastpitch events in Kansas.

Sports tourism has been a subject I have spoken about around the country for the past 15 years and been on committees and boards to drive economic tourism to cities, counties and states. Over the past few years, this landscape has grown extremely competitive as states have identified that sports tourism is the fastest growing sector of tourism and one of the only measurable tourism verticals.

Top Gun Events is one of the top 3 elite level fastpitch companies in the United States and now has the 2nd largest recruiting event in the country that sees over 330 teams of recruitable athletes from 32 states and over 400 college coaches from over 40 states attend this event annually. We have several things working for us to pull this type of event off in Kansas and that includes the central location of the US and the quality facilities we have to run this event.

With this brand exposure and the new landscape of travel sports, this has led many states and cities to collaborate to see us move not only our big event to their state, but to move our entire operation of elite level events. This would also include the addition of a professional softball team, many postseason collegiate events and one of only 5 states selected to host a summer college league for the nation's best players.

This is where this bill comes into play, not only for Top Gun Events, but as one of many opportunities that would exist for the state if this bill were adopted. I have worked with the

Catalyst team for the past 7 months to go on a statewide listening tour and at same time an education tour on what sports tourism looks like across the country. The message was clear time and time again that this would be supported and a great idea if the state can measure a true ROI. With 23 other states currently having a program in place and others being added annually, we were able to study best in class from many of these states.

With some recent revisions we would ask to be added to the bill, we believe this is a program that can impact sporting events statewide, bring in out of state travelers to this state, and move us from a fly over state to a destination for youth, collegiate, and professional sports. Below are the key highlights of the bill and how this structure guarantees a traceable ROI for the state.

- \$3.575M initial investment
 - Fund pays for itself as money is granted
- Grant program allows for small and big events to be attracted to the state
- Money is not granted until post event and an economic report is generated by the State.
 - 90-day post event funding
 - Means the state has their tax money prior to any allocation of funds
- Rigor around the reporting of these events only allows for a true ROI to the state and must be administered at a high level between State/DMO's/Event Rights Holders.
- \$3.575M if allocated annually yields a return to the State of over \$14M.

I appreciate the opportunity to be heard and the consideration to adopt HB2346. This is a unique opportunity for the State of Kansas to not only get into the game of travel and collegiate sports but to become a nation leader in this area. This program would now allow for prior investment of infrastructure throughout the state to have a mechanism to attract these top economic driving events to the state.

Top Gun Events submits this testimony as an enthusiastic endorsement of House Bill 2346 with clarification of ROI and criteria amendment language and respectfully asks that this bill be passed out of committee and submitted for full approval of the House of Representatives.

Respectfully,

Jeremy McDowell