

Dear Chair Bergquist, and Local Government Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 2769, introduced at the request of Representative Carolyn Caiharr.

HB 2769 establishes a clear and important principle: when a municipality creates a subordinate service taxing area and authorizes that governing body to impose property taxes or establish budgets and expenditures funded by those taxes, all appointed members of that governing body must reside within the taxing area.

At its core, this bill reinforces a foundational concept of representative government that those who have authority to impose a tax should live among, and be directly accountable to, the taxpayers who bear that burden. From the earliest days of our nation, the principle that taxation must be tied to representation has shaped public trust in government. Likewise, Kansas has long maintained a strong tradition of local control and accountable governance, recognizing that decisions affecting property and livelihood are best made by those who share directly in their impact.

Property taxes are not abstract policy decisions. They directly impact homeowners, small businesses, seniors on fixed incomes, and working families. When governing body members reside within the taxing area:

- They personally experience the financial impact of the tax decisions they make.
- They share in the economic realities of rising property valuations and mill levies.
- They are more directly accountable to their neighbors and fellow taxpayers.
- Public confidence in the fairness and legitimacy of tax decisions is strengthened.

HB 2769 does not eliminate municipal authority or disrupt governance structures. Rather, it ensures alignment between decision-making authority and taxpayer impact. It promotes transparency, accountability, and trust in local government; principles that are deeply embedded in both our constitutional system and Kansas civic tradition.

Even when current appointments may comply with broader residency rules, this legislation clarifies that when property taxes are imposed or budgets are established for a defined taxing area, representation should be rooted within that area. This is a reasonable, balanced safeguard that enhances good governance without creating undue burden.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support HB 2769.

Thank you for your service and considering my testimony.

Sincerely,
Sam Voyles