

Legislative Testimony House Bill 2767

Good morning, my name is Perry Wiggins, I serve as the Executive Director of the Governor's Military Council, State of Kansas. I want to thank Chairman James and the members of the Veterans and Military Committee for the opportunity to testify and advocate for House Bill 2767. A bill that establishes the Kansas Military Affairs Commission. The establishment of a Military Affairs Commission in the State of Kansas will send a clear and resounding message to those who wear the cloth of the Nation that we as Kansans truly understand the cost and sacrifices associated with protecting our liberties and freedoms and will work tirelessly to make the State of Kansas the "Best Place to Call Home" for our Service Men and Women, Veterans, and their Families.

Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF), I have had the distinct honor and privilege to wear the uniform of a United States Army Officer in service to this nation for 33 years. I have witnessed first-hand this nation's most precious resource, its sons and daughters standing on point willing to sacrifice their lives to protect our very way of life. Throughout its storied past the State of Kansas has earned a reputation as a "Military Friendly State", a state that wraps its arms around servicemembers and their families. Passing House Bill 2767 will codify through legislation an enduring legacy of the State of Kansas' commitment to our Military.

Armed with an appreciation that some on the committee may not be familiar with the Governor's Military Council I thought it might be useful to provide some historical perspective and information (Purpose/ Lines of Effort/ Duties of the Executive Director/ Current Council Members/ Economic Impact of Installations in Kansas/ Federal Appropriations for Military Activities/ Governor's Military Council Action Items/ Quality of Life Successes).

Historical Background: As a bulwark against the Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure Initiative (BRAC), Governor Graves directed the establishment of an ad hoc group to protect against a possible military downsizing of troops and force structure in the state of Kansas. In 2005 with the possibility of another BRAC looming on the horizon, Governor Sebelius signed Executive Order 07-05, creating the Governor's Military Council. The Council's structure has changed over the past 21 years but the purpose/focus has remained relatively steady. The Council serves as a key partner with local communities, administration, key legislators, members of the Kansas congressional delegation, key business and military leaders to grow and optimize the military presence in Kansas, including recruitment and retention of new missions and force structure. It works to leverage this growth into additional defense related jobs. The Council fosters cooperation between the installations and private and public sectors, and pursues initiatives to enhance the quality of life for all military personnel, active and retired. The council also assists in the development, coordination, and execution of strategy required by any future change in missions proposed by the Department of Defense.

During a budget environment characterized by fiscal unpredictability and defense downsizing the goal of the Governor's Military Council for 2025/26 is in partnership with local units of

government develop a Campaign Strategy and Action Plans which protect Kansas military installations and mission. **We also protect the Department of Defense's economic impact for the State of Kansas which equates to approximately 10 to 12 Billion dollars a year. The Department of Defense is one of the largest employers in the State of Kansas employing over 41,000 people, 169,560 jobs are supported directly or indirectly (9.4% of total employment) by defense related employers, \$393.6 million per year in city/county, region and state tax revenue.**

The Governor's Military Council operates across Seven Lines of Effort (LOE): (1) Optimizing the military presence in Kansas—including recruitment and retention of new missions and force structure. (2) Actively foster close and effective cooperation among the installations and private and public sectors throughout the state. (3) Pursue initiatives to enhance the quality of life for our service men and women, veterans, and their families. (4) Promote Kansas as a desired location for all Department of Defense retirees and separating service members. (5) Assist in the transfer of technology between the military and private sector to enhance the competitive posture both in the national and global market. (6) Explore and develop outreach opportunities for individuals retiring and separating from military service to use their talents as members of the Kansas Workforce. (7) Assist in the development, coordination, and execution of strategy required by any future change in missions proposed by the Department of Defense.

Department of Defense Economic Impact—State of Kansas: A source of economic development often overlooked is the contribution of the military to the Kansas economy. Several military installations foster growth of the state's economy by increasing private sector jobs and overall economic well-being, including: Forbes Field, Fort Leavenworth, Fort Riley, McConnell Air Force base, and Smokey Hill Range Air National Guard. The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) 2005 and the deactivation of 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division in 2012 highlighted the importance of the military's contribution to the state's economy. Military activity in the state of Kansas includes contracts awarded to companies in Kansas, and a portion of payments to retired individuals, and active duty, civilian, reserve and National Guard personnel. **The combined total impact to GSP (output) was at least 10 billion, or 7 percent of Kansas GSP. The military directly and indirectly supported nearly 170,000 jobs (9.4 percent of total employment), paying a total of 5.7 billion in wages. Of the 170,000 jobs created by military activity, military contracts support an estimated 49,000 jobs in Kansas with an impact of 1.9 billion in wages. Output, employment and earnings creates fiscal impacts, or tax revenues to cities, counties and the state of Kansas. The total fiscal impact from military activity in Kansas contributed 49.9 million to city/county revenues, 73.5 million to region (multiple counties) revenues and 270.2 million to state revenues. Total tax revenue collections attributable to military activity was estimated to be 393.6 million. Military activity, another component of the total impact, further affects the state economy by employing or providing income directly to individuals.** This includes not only active duty, civilian, and Reserve and National Guard personnel, but in some cases their dependents. These same people then create demands for local goods and services to supporting industries, such as retail trade, entertainment, housing and medical services.

Since the establishment of the Governor's Military Council through Executive Order in 2005, the State of Kansas has secured more than 2 billion dollars in federal appropriations

for military activities, driving significant economic development and investment throughout Kansas Military Communities. Examples of federal appropriations allocated to the State of Kansas since Fiscal Year (FY) 2022: In FY 22, \$34,420,000, for the Topeka National Guard and Reserve Center Building (\$420,000 for Design) and the Fort Leavenworth Child Development Center (\$34,000,000 for construction). FY 23, \$15,930,000 for the Fort Riley, Custer Hill, Enlisted Barracks (\$15,930,000 for design). FY 24, \$16,766,000 for Fort Riley Air Traffic Control Tower (\$1,600,000 for planning and design), Fort Riley Automated Infantry Platoon Battle Course (UMMC) (\$8,200,000), Fort Riley Bob Dole Intermodal Railyard Improvements (\$1,110,000 for planning and design), Topeka National Guard and Readiness Center Building (\$5,856,000). FY 25, Leavenworth Fire Station Truck Bay Addition (UMMC) (\$8,200,000), Fort Leavenworth Fire Station Headquarters (\$1,800,000 for design).

In Fiscal Year 2026, the Governor’s Military Council in coordination with the installations and the State of Kansas Federal delegation are currently working the following military appropriations (\$64,000,000): Fort Leavenworth Centennial Bridge Right-of-way purchasing & utility relocation (THUD) (\$4,000,000), Fort Leavenworth Fire Station Truck Bay Addition (UMMC) (\$8,200,000), Fort Leavenworth Functional Fitness Center (\$1,700,000 for design), Fort Riley Air Traffic Control Tower (Construction) (\$26,000,000), Fort Riley Access Control Point (ACP) Improvements (UMMC) (\$5,500,000), Fort Riley Construct Deployment Ready Reaction Field – Staging Area (\$2,600,000 for design), Fort Riley Permanent Party Barracks (\$16,000,000 design – finalize to 100%).

Military Installations Economic Impact for the State of Kansas:

FORT LEAVENWORTH: Fort Leavenworth, Kansas is the oldest continuously operating military installation west of the Mississippi River and is the Army’s center for excellence in combined arms education, doctrine, and leader development. This historic post, noted for its campus setting, open green spaces and hometown character is the home of the Army’s Combined Arms Center (CAC), a major subordinate headquarters of the Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). CAC has often been referred to as the “Intellectual Center of the Army” and is engaged in the mission of preparing the Army and its leaders for war. Fort Leavenworth is the home of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the Foreign Military Studies Office. Fort Leavenworth is also home to the Military Corrections Complex, consisting of the United States Disciplinary Barracks, the Department of Defense only maximum-security prison, and the Midwest Joint Regional Correctional Facility. The total Installation population is: 15,258. Total Off-Post population is 46,543 (this includes retirees).

Economic Data Points-- Fort Leavenworth: *Economic Impact for Fort Leavenworth is: Total Payroll \$395,804,571 Total Expenditures \$70,289,804, Travel Expenditures \$184,619, Major Construction \$54,585,100, and USD 207 Annual Budget 46,129,502. The Total Economic Impact for Fort Leavenworth is: 1,481,037,066.*

FORT RILEY: Fort Riley is known as “The Home of The Big Red One”, the Army’s First Infantry Division. Located at the confluence of the Smokey Hill and the Republican Rivers in north central Kansas this post serves as a power projection platform for one of the Army’s premier fighting forces. This historic post host over 41,000 Active Military, Family Members, and Civilian Employees. It also serves as the home for one of the Army’s Battlefield Simulation Centers, a state-of-the-art simulation system used to prepare brigade and battalion sized formations for combat. Fort Riley also provides training assistance to the Army National Guard

and United States Army Reserves. Providing continuous training to over 24,000 reservists annually. The training includes live-fire training for artillery, tanks, and other heavy weapons.

Economic Data Points—Fort Riley: ***Economic Impact for Fort Riley is: Total Payroll \$1,213,173,027, Contracts: Service and Supply \$148,778,402 Construction \$55,177,123, Education (Federal Impact Aid) \$16616,828, Veteran Expenditures \$385,941,677, and Health Care \$94,731,352. The Total Economic Impact for Fort Riley is: 2,011,977,746 With a generally accepted Congressional Budget Office (CBO) economic multiplier of 2.2 per \$1 of direct expenditures Fort Riley’s full economic impact would be more than: 4,426,351,041.***

45% of the GDP of the Central Flint Hills Region is directly related to the Department of Defense. Regional Military and Military Related Populations is 67,662 Military, Family Members, Civilian Employees, Veterans, and Military Retirees. Soldier, Federal Employee dependents account for 19% (5,599 students) of the total student population in the Central Flint Hills. Military Retiree and Veteran Expenditures accounted for \$385,941,677 in FY25.

McCONNELL AIR FORCE BASE: McConnell Air Force Base is the home of the Air Mobility Command’s 22nd Air Refueling Wing, Airforce Reserve Command’s 931st Air Refueling Group, and the Kansas Air National Guard’s 184th Intelligence Wing. McConnell supports worldwide aerial refueling and airlift operations, thus providing global reach for troops, equipment, and supplies in support of global contingency and conventional operations. McConnell is the home the United States Air Force’s new strategic tanker the KC-46A.

Economic Data Points—McConnell Air Force Base: ***Economic Impact For McConnell Air Force Base is: Total Payroll \$566,324,233, Construction \$71,311,143, Service Contracts \$10,025,456, and other expenditures \$26,445,529. The Total Economic Impact for McConnell Air Force Base is: 138,799,791.*** Another measure of economic significance is the number of indirect jobs created. There are the additional retail, service, wholesale, and construction jobs that exist in the community because of the base. An estimated 2,467 of these secondary jobs were sustained in FY17. *The Total Economic Impact of McConnell Air Force Base and its tenants was \$586,400,000 for the 50-mile radius surrounding the base.*

FORBES FIELD, TOPEKA, KANSAS: Forbes Field is the headquarters of the Kansas National Guard and home to the Kansas Air National Guard’s 190th Air Refueling Wing. It occupies 215 acres on the south-side of the Topeka Airport, located approximately five miles south of downtown Topeka. The mission of the 190th is to “Provide a professionally trained militia, ready to serve community, state, and nation”. The 190th occupies seven administrative facilities, 16 industrial facilities, and two service facilities totaling approximately 523,100 square feet with 323 full time personnel. Unit training drills conducted once-a-month result in a surge of up to a total of 1,152 personnel. The 190th provides Global Reach for the United States Air Force through in-flight refueling of fighters, bombers, and other aircraft using the KC-135 tanker.

SMOKEY HILL RANGE COMPLEX (NATIONAL GUARD), SALINA,

KANSAS: Smokey Hill Air National Guard Range near Salina, Kansas is the largest bombing range in the Air National Guard inventory. Within the Smokey Hill’s 34,000 acres lies a 12,000-acre target area, which is comprised of dual conventional ranges and three large tactical ranges. The tactical ranges provide the most realistic air-to-ground training available for all types of military aircraft. Smokey Hill also has four drop zones for cargo aircraft. In light of recent military technological applications, National Guard F-16s are being modified to deliver precision guided munitions providing pinpoint accuracy to destroy enemy targets. Smokey Hill

is one of three Air National Guard air-to-ground ranges in the United States where pilots can practice these technological deliveries.

Governor's Military Council's current action items/ focus:

- (1) Provide expertise and federal support during the establishment of the Fort Riley Innovation Unit in partnership with Kansas State University.
- (2) Provide assistance and advocacy for Fort Leavenworth who is at the forefront of the Army Transformation Initiative with Training & Doctrine Command merging with Army Futures Command. The Governor's Military Council ensures the State of Kansas maintains attentiveness and advocacy on behalf of Fort Leavenworth to ensure mission sustainment and growth opportunities when they avail themselves.
- (3) Advocating critical military construction infrastructure projects, personnel quality-of-life, and the Kansas defense ecosystem.
- (4) Coordinate annual StaffDel trips are coordinated with the assistance of Baker Donelson to provide face-to-face discussions with Military leadership and understand the concerns of their communities / installations.
- (5) Monitor and advocate in support of KC-46 Main Operating Base #8 and #9 decision in September 2026 and beyond (Kansas Air National Guard 190th Air Refueling Wing).
- (6) Federal / Legislative expansion efforts for Intergovernmental Support Agreements on Installations to expedite construction timelines and better quality-of-life metrics.
- (7) Bi-monthly engagements with Missouri to coordinate on various regional priorities and / or federal programs and requests (i.e. New Centennial Bridge).
- (8) Increase involvement with the Office of Local Defense Communities Cooperation (OLDCC) to address local infrastructure projects, help sustain mission readiness / force projection and grow economic development efforts.
- (9) Strategize and align an Unmanned systems and Counter-unmanned systems (UAS / C-UAS) framework to make the State of Kansas a leader in the "future fight."

In conclusion, thank you very much for the opportunity to testify before the committee. During my tenure as the Executive Director of the Governor's Military Council, I have had the distinct honor to work alongside many of our Kansas Congressional Delegation, some serving on this very committee today, as we worked on legislation to improve the lives of those service members, veterans and their families who reside in our great state. The passage of important legislative initiatives like the establishment of a monument on State Capital grounds recognizing the "Gold Star Families" in Kansas, providing 100 percent of Federal Impact Aid to Federally Impacted Schools in Kansas, and passage of legislation to facilitate a smooth Military Spouse Licensing/credentialing Reciprocity process, have contributed to establishing the reputation of the State of Kansas as a "Military Friendly State". I truly believe passage of House Bill 2767 will demonstrate the State of Kansas' resolve to create an enduring legacy of embracing those who serve our Nation.

