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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AND MILITARY

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2623 February 8, 2024

**Eric Rohleder
Deputy Director, Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office**

Chairman Ellis and members of the House Veterans and Military Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on HB2623. This bill addresses minor changes to KSA 73-1234, the Veterans Claims Assistance Program statute.

When KSA 73-1234 was originally signed into law in 2006, the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers was the preferred training program authorized by the Department of Veterans Affairs for Veteran Service Representative training. Since that time, numerous other organizations have been recognized and approved by the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs to provide Veteran Service Representative training. This change would allow the KCVAO and our VCAP partners the flexibility to work with a wider audience of accredited and approved training organizations.

Similarly, when KSA 71-1234 was originally published, the Veteran Service Organizations were required to establish offices in the three Federal VA Medical Centers (Topeka, Leavenworth, Wichita). In August of 2023, the VA Regional Office moved out of the Dole Regional VA Medical Center. The Regional Office is now housed in its own facility in East Wichita. The wording change would allow our VCAP partners to occupy workspaces in the Federal VA Medical Centers and or the new Regional Office.

This wording change has been discussed with all stakeholders involved in the VCAP grant program and all members support the changes. I will stand for questions.