

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE CAPITOL
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
(785) 296-7695
chris.croft@house.ks.gov

8909 W. 148TH TERRACE
OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS 66221



CHRISTOPHER D. CROFT
8TH DISTRICT

House Committee on Taxation
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66621

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Chairman Johnson and Committee Members:

I am here to ask for your support on HB2615. Repeatedly, we hear that property valuations are out of control. We heard in this committee from the Kansas City Kansas Chamber of Commerce where many businesses are trying to deal with 200% rise in property valuations over the last three years. When I talk with constituents this is one of their top issues on their homes.

There is a process today adjudicate. First you have an informal request for the appraiser to reconsider. Then you have a formal request to the appraiser to reconsider. In both cases, you are going back to the very person that made the determination. The next step is small claims where lawyers are needed. You only get to present your case and then a non-binding determination is made. The next step is with the Board of Tax Appeals (BOTA). If one still disagrees, then its on to the court system.


The bill replaces the small claims with a mediation. Both sides get to present their position in the room together and then they work through a trained mediator in a structured process.

Structure – 5 step process:

- 1) Mediation contract
- 2) Open session, parties meet with the mediator, together
- 3) Mediator meeting separately with the parties
- 4) Mediator conveying offers and counteroffers from one camp to the other, and back again
- 5) Signing of a formal, written settlement agreement

Mediation has a success rate of between 85% and 90%. Mediations often succeed where negotiations fail because of the rigorous structure imposed. I'm interested in solving problems at the lowest levels.

Respectfully,


Chris Croft