

## **Written Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation**

**Thursday, February 14, 2019**

Thank you Madam Chair, Senator Tyson and good morning to Vice-Chair, Senator Kerschen and to Ranking Minority Member, Senator Holland and to the Distinguished members of the Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation.

I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 91.

My name is Don Woodard. I am a 75, year-old retiree living in rural Auburn, Kansas. I am currently serving my fourth consecutive two-year term as the elected Speaker of the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature (the SHL). I am currently serving my fifth consecutive two-year term as the elected Silver Haired Legislator representing the Sixth District of Shawnee County.

The Kansas Legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution #1649 in 1982 that created the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature which is patterned after the Kansas House of Representatives. The SHL was incorporated as a non-profit organization in Kansas and non-profit status was granted by the IRS.

One of the important goals of the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature is to educate the citizenry regarding the needs of the elderly and to educate senior citizens about the legislative process. As volunteers we will become involved with senior citizens and become an advocate for senior citizen issues. We actively communicate and serve as liaison for our constituents and with State Legislators.

Over the past several years the Silver Haired Legislature has attempted to propose legislation that would allow senior citizens to be eligible for property tax abatement based on their age, the value of their residence and their income level.

While SB91 goes beyond just senior citizen home owners by including renters and disabled veterans, we have no problem with their inclusion in this property tax relief proposal.

We understand that this bill could help as many as 42,000 senior citizens and disabled veterans in its first year. With a fiscal note of \$10 million, we believe this is a reasonable cost to the state relative to the amount of good that will result from its application by providing relief from the constantly increasing property taxes for the elderly and disabled with low fixed incomes.

Therefore, the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature supports SB91 and encourages the committee to report the bill favorably for passage by the full Senate.

Thank you for your time and attention. I will remain and stand for any questions at the time designated by the Chair.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Woodard, Speaker, Kansas Silver Haired Legislature