



TESTIMONY

House Financial Institutions and Rural Development

Nichole Tiffany

February 14, 2022

Chairman Kelly and members of the committee, thank you for investing in the future of rural Kansas. I am Nichole Tiffany and I am here today to voice my support for House Bill 2569.

My husband Shawn and I, along with our family, own and operate Tiffany Cattle Company, a complete cattle feeding and marketing service near Council Grove. As cattle grazers in the Kansas Flint Hills, we are stewards of the tallgrass prairie and have recently taken on a new role as stewards of one of Council Grove's historic downtown buildings. Preserving our state's rural communities goes hand in hand with conserving one of the world's most endangered landscapes.

The pandemic has reinforced the importance of community and the value of our small towns. Our rural downtown is a symbol of community, character, and history that draws people to Council Grove.

When you see your community through others' eyes, you begin to realize that you have something that is worth investing in. That is what we've done. When we purchased the Peyton Jones Building in late 2020, most of the building's second-floor had been vacant for over 50 years. Now, we're rehabilitating the building to address a need for housing, flexible office space, and meeting space in our community.

Downtown development in rural Kansas presents unique challenges. In some places, a downtown commercial building costs less than \$5000, but overcoming decades of neglect can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. In small towns, where resale values don't match up to the expense, this creates a finance gap.

We urge your support for House Bill 3569 because these places matter and, regardless of the challenges, our communities are worth investing in. Thank you for identifying a need in rural Kansas and working to find a solution.

