



**Date:** February 8, 2023

**To:** Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Insurance  
Senator Jeff Longbine, Chairman

**From:** Alex Orel, Senior Vice President – Government Relations  
Kansas Bankers Association

**Re:** Written Proponent Testimony – SB 34

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Alex Orel providing proponent testimony on behalf of the Kansas Bankers Association (KBA). The KBA was organized in 1887, and our membership includes 98% of the 208 banks and savings & loans headquartered in Kansas. Our membership also includes 20 out-of-state commercial banks operating in Kansas. The Kansas banking industry employs more than 22,000 Kansans that provide financial services in every county across the state. Our organizational mission statement is:

*"Together, we support our member banks and bankers with leadership, advocacy, and education to benefit the communities and customers they serve."*

The KBA recognizes that there is a shortage of attainable housing for both low-income and moderate-income Kansans. A shortage of quality housing is an undeniable barrier to economic growth and development for any community, whether rural or urban. Bankers are committed to seeing that everyone with the dream of homeownership has that opportunity. At the direction of our members, the KBA supports policies that will encourage the improvement of existing houses, generate new construction, and incentivize financial investment in the communities and the customers our bankers serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony today in support of SB 34 and thank you and the Kansas Legislature for their overwhelming support of last year's major housing bill, HB 2237, which we believe is the most significant in our state's history. SB 34 would build on that bill from 2022 to expand the already successful Rural Housing Incentive District (RHID) program to the currently non-eligible communities with populations of 60,000 and above. Although this program is being expanded to populations over 60,000, we believe appropriate guardrails and limits are in place so it won't be overused. On the heels of the significant housing legislation from 2022, we believe SB 34 is another way to complement programs passed last year to increase housing development and address Kansas's housing crisis and shortage.

We view this bill as another tool in the toolbox to help our communities grow by making housing more attainable, which will attract new residents, businesses, and jobs to all parts of our state.

As stated above, our mission at the KBA is to support the banking industry to benefit the communities and customers they serve. We support SB 34 as means of accomplishing that mission. Again, Mr. Chairman, thank you, and if you or the committee have questions or require additional information, don't hesitate to contact me at [aorel@ksbankers.com](mailto:aorel@ksbankers.com) or (785) 232-3444.