Dear Governor Laura Kelly and Secretary Mark Burghart,

As a member of the House Transportation Committee and a representative deeply committed to the concerns of our constituents, I am writing to express my personal reservations and the public disapproval surrounding the recent unveiling of the new license plate design scheduled for implementation in spring 2024.

While I acknowledge the necessity for safety improvements and the replacement of deteriorating embossed plates, it is evident that the public response to the new design has been less than favorable. There is a consensus that we can, and should, strive for a better design that resonates positively with the citizens of Kansas, distinct from the New York-style license plate proposed.

As representatives of the people, it's imperative that we consider the sentiments and concerns of Kansans, particularly when it involves something as prominent as the license plates that will adorn their vehicles for the next decade or more. License plates are more than just identifiers; they symbolize a sense of pride and belonging for the people of our state.

The decision to introduce these new plates without prior public input or feedback seems to have overlooked the importance of engaging our citizens in such matters. As far as I am aware, there was no comprehensive gathering of public opinion regarding the new design, which raises serious concerns about the process.

As Kansas boasts a wealth of talented and creative artists, I suggest establishing a specialized platform or submission process. This platform would empower Kansans to share their ideas and feedback regarding the new license plate design before its finalization, ensuring their active participation and a more inclusive decision-making process. By fostering this avenue for public input, we aim to cultivate a heightened sense of civic engagement among the residents, allowing them to play a meaningful role in shaping a symbol of our state's identity.

Furthermore, the Legislature was not given the opportunity to review or discuss the new design until merely an hour before its public announcement. This limited time for assessment and discussion does not align with the significance of this decision for the people of Kansas.

As a member of the Transportation Committee, I respectfully request that the Department of Revenue postpone the rollout of these new plates until the Legislature reconvenes in January and can deliberate on this matter. This delay would allow us the opportunity to thoroughly
study our options, engage with the public for their feedback, and ensure that any changes made regarding license plate designs reflect the desires and values of our constituents. It’s essential that we uphold a transparent and open process, considering the significant impact these plates have on the identity and pride of Kansans everywhere.

I appreciate your understanding of the importance of this matter and your collaboration in finding a solution that aligns with the values of our constituents.

Sincerely,

Rep. Nick Hoheisel

State Representative, 97th District