



Neutral Testimony on HB 2036
To the House Commerce, Labor & Economic Development Committee
February 1, 2017
Matt Lindsey, President
Kansas Independent College Association

Testimony:

Chairman Mason and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide neutral testimony related to HB 2036.

KICA represents the nineteen independent colleges of Kansas, all of whom are not-for-profit institutions of higher education, all of whom offer undergraduate degrees, and all of whom are regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

Among the nineteen non-profit, independent colleges and universities in Kansas, several have aviation-related degree programs. Two of our members in particular are engaged in this field. Hesston College, in Hesston, KS, has a long-standing aviation three-year degree program for professional pilots and a two-year degree program for air traffic control professionals, and Central Christian College of Kansas, in McPherson, KS, has a three-year degree program for pilots and a growing certificate program in UAV operation.

As such, KICA supports the intent of HB 2036, however we have a concern that the language used in the bill creates an eligibility threshold that is inappropriate. In Section 1, subsection (e), the definition of “institution” is set to include “any other public or private college or university that is accredited by a *national* accrediting body.” (emphasis added) However, all KICA institutions, including Hesston and Central Christian College of Kansas, are accredited by a regional accreditor – the Higher Learning Commission – and not by national accrediting bodies. In the realm of higher education, the regional accreditors are the primary quality-assurance bodies for nearly all of the public and non-profit institutions in the United States. “National” accreditors tend to be more niche focused on certain specific types of degree programs (nursing, for instance) and for some of the for-profit higher education community.

Thus, KICA is neutral on HB 2036, but would offer our strong support to the bill if the definition was revised to include colleges accredited by a “*regional* accrediting body” or more specifically, the Higher Learning Commission, which encompasses all the institutions in Kansas.

Thank you for the opportunity to come before you on this issue. I am happy to answer any questions you may have or provide additional data as you request.