



**House Higher Education Budget Committee
Written testimony in opposition to HB 2643
Presented by Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs**

Monday, February 19, 2018

Mister Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs for the Kansas Chamber. On behalf of the Kansas Business Coalition for Immigration reform, we would like to submit these comments in opposition to House Bill 2643 which repeals the in-state tuition policy for undocumented students.

The Kansas Business Coalition for Immigration Reform was formed 10 years ago to stop anti-business legislation from passing in Kansas. We maintain immigration is a national issue that needs addressed at the federal level. We are pleased that the President and Congress have finally begun consideration of major immigration reforms and we are currently monitoring activity in the United States Senate as they debate a variety of proposals including Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) which the President has been willing to compromise.

Our coalition has opposed any statewide efforts on immigration reform because of strong concerns from the business community over trying to comply with a patchwork of immigration laws that vary by state. However, as immigration reform talks have ramped up on the national level, and President Trump outlined his four pillars of immigration reform, we would urge this committee to avoid taking harmful action against students who were brought to the states by their parents and have experienced growing up in America. They know no other country.

A responsive immigration system is vital to the Kansas economy and affects every aspect of the state. We need skilled workers at all levels to continue to grow the states' economy. Kansas has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation. Recent Kansas unemployment data reflects that 63 of the 105 Kansas counties had unemployment rates less than 4%. Twenty-seven of 105 counties had unemployment rates between 4 to 5% and only 15 counties had rates higher than 5%. Five Kansas counties have zero residents receiving unemployment insurance benefits.

The CATO Institute recently published a report estimating that repeal or rollback of DACA would have a negative \$1.7 billion impact on our state. Our coalition had not taken a position on this issue in the past, and have not officially weighed in on the in-state tuition debate in prior legislative sessions, as we have focused on the business aspects of immigration. However, last fall our coalition urged our delegation to support numerous policy proposals including changes for skilled worker visas, ag guest workers, and DACA.

Our concern now focuses on the potential economic impacts to our state, and we view this issue as business issue. We are at full employment. We now have jobs searching for people. Repealing the in-state tuition benefit for DACA-eligible students, who are choosing to go to college, to gain an education, so they can be contributors to our nation's economy, is short-sighted and will harm our state.

In closing, we thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill 2643, and ask that you oppose this bill.

**Corporate Immigration Compliance Institute
Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce
Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce
Kansas Economic Progress Council
Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association
Kansas Building Industry Association
Kansas Chamber of Commerce
Kansas Contractors Association
Kansas Cooperative Council
Kansas Corn Growers Association
Kansas Dairy Association
Kansas Economic Development Alliance
Kansas Farm Bureau
Kansas Grain and Feed Association
Kansas Livestock Association
Kansas Manufactured Housing Association
Kansas Pork Association**

**Kansas Restaurant and Hospitality Association
Kansas Society for Human Resource
Management
Kansas Soybean Association
Kansans for Sensible Immigration Policy
Lawrence Chamber of Commerce
Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce
Mid-America Green Industry Council
Overland Park Chamber of Commerce
Renew Kansas
Travel Industry Association of Kansas
Unified Government of Wyandotte County /
Kansas City
Wichita Independent Business Association
Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce
City of Wichita**