



KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

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Senate Bill 44, School Finance Bill
Senate Select Committee on Education Finance
February 6, 2019

Madame Chair, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today in strong support of Senate Bill 44.

We believe this bill is the solution to the latest ruling in the Gannon school finance lawsuit. We believe it can result in the last Gannon ruling.

Senate Bill 44 is the right thing to do for several important reasons.

- It meets the recommendations of the State Board of Education, the entity charged with oversight of our public education system.
- It will bring funding back to the level it would have been if the state had been able to honor the promises of the Montoy solution and then had met inflation every year after.
- It does not make any changes to the formula that would call equity back into question.
- It would result in a school finance system that is constitutional both in equity and adequacy.

But we also know that from the standpoint of Kansas teachers and school support personnel, the passage of this bill is very important.

Our teachers and other school employees want to know as soon as possible that the decision has been made to fully fund schools and to keep equity clean in the formula. They want to know now that they will be back in their classrooms next August, that their students will be there ready to start another year, that their colleagues that support learning are on board and ready to go. They want to know that they can make their car payments and mortgage payments on time.

They want to do the thing they love the most - teach. And to teach without worry.

For the last decade, these educators have faced disappointment after disappointment. They have seen their salaries frozen and their take-home pay reduced as they absorbed health insurance increases. They have lost many of their colleagues through staff reductions. Their supply budgets have been slashed, they are teaching with outdated textbooks, and recently they have fretted over whether their schools would even open. We can now begin to reverse all of that.

This bill, if passed cleanly by both the House and Senate and signed by the Governor will do these things.

My grandson will enter the 8th grade in August. He has never been in a constitutionally funded school. As he moves towards his high school experience, I hope that he will benefit from the funding that the

legislature has provided starting with the 2017 and 2018 bills and ending with this bill being heard today. I hope the members of this committee also want that experience for their own children or grandchildren.

I think of what our schools and teachers can do for my grandson – and for the children and grandchildren of all Kansans – if they are constitutionally funded. Our children can have the support of more related service providers, counselors, and librarians to help them reach new heights. They could have the support of a school nurse to watch over their health concerns. They can learn from updated textbooks and new technology. There is so much more that we can offer to this generation as they move forward in education and for future generations as they enter our schools.

You've seen the slogan on the lapel pins: Kansans Can! Today KANSANS CAN fully fund a constitutional school finance plan for the next generation of Kansas children. This is an opportunity we should not miss.

On behalf of the teachers of Kansas and that next generation of children, I urge you to pass SB 44 without amendment.