



TO: House Committee on Insurance and Pensions
Rep. Steven Johnson, Chairman

FROM: Keeping the Kansas Promise Coalition
Michael Scribner, Chairman

RE: WRITTEN ONLY-OPPOSITION Testimony HB 2044

DATE: February 15, 2021

Chairman Johnson and Members of the House Insurance and Pensions
Committee:

The Keeping the Kansas Promise Coalition (KKP) appreciates the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to HB 2044 which would increase KPERS School members employee contributions from the current level of 6.0% to 7.15% and dedicate that increase towards reducing the Unfunded Actuarial Liability of the KPERS State-School group. As we understand it, the bill would also provide for funding to be provided to local school districts to provide for a corresponding salary increase in order to offset the higher employee contributions.

While as a Coalition we are in favor of taking responsible steps to reduce the KPERS Unfunded Actuarial Liability, we have significant concerns over two key tenants of this bill.

First, is a concern about the role and responsibility of local school boards, not the Legislature, to determine salaries for their respective KPERS school employees. This bill would seem to fly in the face of that fundamental tenant and work to undermine local control and the authority of locally elected school boards.

Second, we have a concern that this bill would not adhere to the Kansas Supreme Court decision in *Singer v Topeka* that ruled a corresponding retirement benefit increase be provided when an employee's contribution increases. Until these concerns can be adequately addressed, we stand in opposition to HB 2044.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this written testimony for your consideration.

Keeping the Kansas Promise Coalition is a coalition of public employee organizations including, teachers, public safety workers, state, city and county employees, formed to collectively advocate for fair and affordable reforms to the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System to ensure the long-term solvency of the System.