

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lisa Benlon at 3:30 p.m. on February 19, 2001 in Room 231-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Chairperson Benlon (E)

Committee staff present: Carol Rampey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Avis Swartzman, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Dee Woodson, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Ron Gaches, Kansas Dental Hygienists' Association
Jeri Freed, Executive Director, Kansas Dental Board
Kevin Robertson, Executive Director, Kansas Dental Association
Joyce Volmut, Executive Director, Kansas Association of the Medically Underserved (written only)
Representative Jim Garner
Craig Grant, Kansas NEA
Dr. Kim Wilcox, Executive Director, Kansas Board of Regents (written only)
Steve Kearney, Kansas Association of Technical Schools and Colleges
Jim Edwards, Sr. Vice President, Kansas Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Others attending: See attached sheet.

HB 2312 - Dental hygienists student loan act

Vice Chairman Krehbiel opened the hearings on **HB 2312** in place of the Chair who was testifying before another committee at the same time. Ron Gaches, Kansas Dental Hygienists' Association, was the first conferee, speaking in support of the bill. He testified that passage of this bill would encourage new graduates of Kansas Dental Hygiene Programs to practice in areas that are currently underserved through the establishment of a dental hygiene student loan act.

Mr. Gaches stated that it is difficult to get healthcare workers to practice or live in rural Kansas. He said that the maldistribution of numbers of Registered Dental Hygienists in the rural areas has been a continual problem over the years, but believed that with the enactment of this bill the disparity could be lessened. He testified that **HB 2312** was based on the same principle as the Kansas Medical Student Loan Act, and it would create incentive for dental hygiene graduates to practice in a service commitment area of his or her choice upon graduation and licensure. Mr. Gaches told the Committee that if the students should fail to receive a license or fail to practice in the service commitment area, they would be required to repay the loan at an annual interest rate of 15%.
(Attachment 1)

Jeri Freed, Executive Director of the Kansas Dental Board, testified as the second conferee in support of the dental hygienists student loan act. She said that dental workforce data collected during the license renewal process indicated that nearly one-third of the counties in Kansas did not have a practicing dental hygienist.
(Attachment 2)

Kevin Robertson, Executive Director of the Kansas Dental Association, testified in support of **HB 2312**. He stated that Kansas has averaged a little better than a 4% per year increase in the number of dental hygienists licensed and practicing in the state in each of the last three years. He said that KDA believes that the loan repayment incentive contained within the proposed legislation would help to entice dental hygienists into rural areas. (Attachment 3)

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Written testimony was submitted by Joyce Volmut, Executive Director of the Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved. ([Attachment 4](#))

Committee discussion and questions followed relating to: problems with admissions for Kansas residents to UMKC Dental School, Kansas not having a dental school and explanation of the reciprocity agreement with UMKC, the need also for dental students to work in the rural areas, other opportunities with bordering states' dental schools, possibility of enlarging UMKC school, 36 counties not having a dental hygienist and 6-8 counties without a dentist, how long the students have to work in the underserved areas in order to pay off the loans, proposed bill modeled off of the medical student program, number of dental hygienists in the state, explanation of difference between dental hygienists and dental assistants, and the four counties that are excluded in this bill.

There were no opponents appearing before the Committee to testify, and the Vice Chairman closed the hearings on **HB 2312**.

HB 2437 - Kansas education students forgivable loan program

Vice Chairman Krehbiel opened the hearings on **HB 2437**. Representative Jim Garner was the first conferee to testify in support of **HB 2437**. He told the Committee that this bill would create a Kansas Education Students Forgivable Loan Program, and that it was modeled after a very successful program in Georgia. He said that the sponsors of the bill wanted to raise awareness of a very real problem of the looming teacher shortage within the state. He gave the numbers of 530 teacher vacancies in Kansas this year as compared to 196 for the previous year.

Representative Garner testified that this bill would provide loans for education students to pay tuition, fees and other college related costs, and would be \$1500 for each semester of a student's junior and senior years of study. He said the students would be required to teach in a Kansas public school for one year for each semester that the student receives loan assistance, and for each year of teaching, one semester of loan debt would be forgiven. He added that the Kansas State Board of Regents would have the authority to set policies to implement this program. Representative Garner stated that there were state funds available to support the forgivable loan program, and he was proposing to also use some of the lottery funds budgeted for advertising to support this program to recruit new teachers. He concluded by urging the Committee to support the passage of **HB 2437** as it encourages responsibility by expecting something in return for the opportunity provided. ([Attachment 5](#))

General discussion and questions followed regarding: the repayment aspect of the loan program, the funding mechanism, clarification of the bill's goal was to have Kansas educated teachers teaching in Kansas programs, the number graduating in education has dropped in half over the last 20 years from 3300 down to 1500, explanation of the Georgia law this proposed legislation was modeled after, and the fact that Kansas loses 25-30% of graduating teachers in the first five years.

Craig Grant, Kansas NEA, was the second conferee who spoke in favor of **HB 2437**. He testified that there is a definite critical shortage of teachers in Kansas, and KNEA feels that this bill should be part of an over-all strategy to attract and retain quality teachers in Kansas schools. He said they would like to suggest a change to this proposed legislation that does not change the intent of it, and possibly help solve some of the critical shortages in certain disciplines and geographic areas of the state. Mr. Grant suggested that if an eligible student took advantage of the loan program and chose to teach in an area designated as a "high-need" area, that the loan be forgiven twice as quickly as a regular basis loan. He said that they thought the State Department of Education should determine the shortage areas that would qualify under this provision. ([Attachment 6](#))

Dr. Kim Wilcox, Executive Director of the Kansas Board of Regents, submitted written testimony which he said included general remarks about a number of bills being introduced during this legislative session. He said in summary is means too many programs and not enough dollars. ([Attachment 7](#))

Representative Storm asked for clarification on the "twice as quickly" the loan would be paid off. Mr. Grant explained how the loan would be forgiven for half the service time if the student taught in one of the "high-need" areas of the state.

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There being no opponents present to testify on this bill, the Vice Chairman closed the hearings on **HB 2437**.

HB 2349 - Legislative Educational Planning Committee, study of vocational and technical education system

Vice Chairman Krehbiel opened the hearings on **HB 2349**. The first conferee was Steve Kearney, who represented the Kansas Association of Technical Schools and Colleges, and spoke in favor of **HB 2349**. Mr. Kearney presented a balloon version of the bill that provided for the establishment of the Vocational and Technical Workforce Advisory Council to advise the Governor, Legislature, Board of Education and the Board of Regents. He said this proposal also included the makeup of the Council which was to be made up of people who avail themselves of the training and education for the workforce, those that actually use it in business and industry, and also those people within the community college system and the KATSC system that deliver it. (Attachment 8)

Mr. Kearney also distributed to the Committee members a copy of some testimony from Dr. Patrick McAtee, who was a member of the Governor's Task Force on Workforce Development, and concerned this subject. (Attachment 9)

Mr. Kearney testified that he left most of the Revisor's language in tact in terms of what they need to look at over time and initially in the delivery of this proposal. He pointed out in this balloon that with the exception that this Council was directed to, between this session and next session during this interim, conduct a study of the state system for the delivery of vocational and technical education, and how it effects the Kansas workforce. He said that the life of this advisory committee was not addressed in this balloon.

The second conferee to speak in favor of this bill was Jim Edwards, Sr. Vice President of the Kansas Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI). He shared with the Committee that KCCI's business members are telling them, day in and day out, that this was the number one issue as far as workforce development and vocational training. (Attachment 10)

Dr. Kim Wilcox, Executive Director of the Kansas Board of Regents, asked to make a comment. He said he had noticed in the proposed balloon that the Board of Regents was not represented on the Council, and also that the Council is directed to report back to the Legislature and not the Board. He further stated that the Board has worked hard to become a clearing house for legislation regarding postsecondary education, both in terms of creation of activities, but also report back. He requested the Committee give some consideration to these points of concern.

Representative Kuether commented that she serves on a committee as the ranking minority member, and that there is a comprehensive workforce development bill being drafted that will address many of the needs and issues of workforce development concerns.

Vice Chairman Krehbiel closed the hearings on **HB 2349**.

HB 2189 - Public safety officers, educational benefits for dependents

The Vice Chair directed the Committee's attention to **HB 2189** for discussion and possible final action.

Representative Sloan submitted an amendment to **HB 2189**, and he explained what changes he was making to the bill by this amendment. The Revisor, Avis Swartzman, further clarified the proposed amendment. (Attachment 11)

Representative Sloan made a motion to adopt this amendment, and Representative Horst seconded the motion.

Questions and discussion continued by Committee members with clarification on the various types of EMT's

including volunteers like the ones trained by the volunteer fire departments, the municipal like the

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City of Lawrence employees, and employees working for a private company under contract for services. Representative Sloan explained what his proposed amendment does is give some protection to a category of risk takers who provide care and invaluable services to citizens in dangerous situations. He further stated that these people working in emergency medical service are making sacrifices for the public good, and the children of those deceased officers should have a tuition free education, and the numbers of these are very few. Representative Tafari said these people are the ones that operate in a public safety sector, and they are put at an increased risk every time they go out on an emergency call.

Representative Storm asked for clarity purposes, if it was immaterial most EMT's are not public, but private employees. Representative Sloan replied that most EMT's are public employees. Representative Storm asked if most ambulance services are publically funded, and Representative Sloan said that in most communities they are publically funded. Mr. David Lake, State Director of the Kansas State Emergency Medical Service, was in attendance, and he told the Committee that there were 183 licensed ambulance services in the State of Kansas, and of that number 26 are private and some of those are supported by municipal funds to operate. Representative Storm stated that in this bill, they would not need to make a distinction between the two groups as they are both working for the public interest.

Representative Sloan made his closing comments on his amendment. The Vice Chair called for a vote on Representative Sloan's amendment, and motion carried.

Representative Kuether made a motion to pass **HB 2189** out favorably as amended. The motion was seconded by Representative Tanner, and the motion carried.

HB 2013 - State scholarship program, amount of award

The Vice Chairman called for Committee discussion and possible final action on **HB 2013**. He gave a short synopsis of the bill, and said the amount of the award for the scholarships was \$1,000 and had been the same since 1985. He stated that the Regents had requested that the amount be raised to \$1,850, and does not affect the funding but simply to offer the scholarship at a higher amount. The Revisor said that it would be subject to Appropriations, and explained the wording in the bill. Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research Department, explained that it takes out specific references to a student's dollar amount for financial resources and ties it to a federal methodology.

Representative Reardon made a motion to pass **HB 2013** out favorably, and it was seconded by Representative Kuether. Motion carried.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:15 p.m. The next meeting of the House Higher Education Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, February 28, at 3:30 p.m. in Room 231-N of the Capitol.

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