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Oral Testimony – Proponent

House Financial Institutions and Pensions Committee

House Bill 2195

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Chairman Hoheisel, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2195

KNEA has been very vocal on the educator shortage crisis. We've worked with KSDE to address emergency licensure. We've talked to, and testified before, several legislators regarding the challenges that are causing this shortage. We have programs like Educators Rising designed to recruit young people to the profession.

KNEA recognizes that this crisis is real. These are just a few examples of what we are doing to help mitigate the crisis.

We do support the notion of retired educators returning to the classroom as an additional tool to assist in filling the shortages of educators in the classroom. And we're committed to making the path as straight forward and simple as possible. However, we do so with the expectation that equity exists between the full-time educator and the retired educator in two significant areas.

- Licensure
- Professional Negotiations

Licensure

To ensure that every effort is made to put the best possible people in the classroom, we advocate that proposals which water down licensing/certification standards should be avoided as often as possible. As mentioned above, emergency licensure may be appropriate on a temporary basis but should not be overused as a strategy to mitigate the teacher shortage.

Again, we are committed to working with all interested parties in both temporary and permanent solutions to solve the problem of educator shortages, but a shortage alone does not justify an overall reduction in the rigorous

standards which ensure that Kansas students have high quality teachers that possess expertise beyond subject matter knowledge.

Professional Negotiations

KNEA advocates that educators who return to professional employment after KPERS retirement be hired under the same professional negotiated agreement as the other professional employees of that district. We believe this will prevent the practice of turning full-time positions into permanent part-time positions to balance budgets.

Thank you for your time.