

Education Budget Committee  
Testimony on House Bill 2652

by

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On behalf of the University of Kansas Collegiate Veterans Association  
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Thank you, the Education Budget Committee, for allowing me to testify. I would first off like to say, how much of an honor it is to be testifying on behalf of all Honorably Discharged Veterans seeking to further their education at a higher learning institution. My name is Bradley Boomsma and I am an Iraq war disabled veteran. I served as an artilleryman with Bravo Battery 1/142<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery Combat Fires Brigade, which is part of the Arkansas Army National Guard. I served at multiple FOB's in Iraq during OIF IV (Operation Iraqi Freedom) from 2005-2006 earning a Combat Action Badge. I was honorably discharged in November 2009. I am an out-of-state resident currently attending the University of Kansas. My parents did not attend college as they both served in the Army.

As we all know, attaining a degree at a higher education institution is a difficult task for a traditional student. Attaining a degree as a veteran is doubly hard. These young veterans coming home from the conflicts that face our country today have a difficult time readjusting back into civilian life let alone adjusting back into life as a student. I can personally attest to the difficulties as a disabled veteran. If the physical and mental obstacles were not difficult enough, veterans students like me, who are out of state, must also take on the additional financial burden associated with going to college out-of-state.

I attended the University of Arkansas after my service to study history. My interest was mainly military history and the University of Arkansas had two military

history courses at the time. Learning about the dual Masters/PhD program in Military History at the University of Kansas, I became more intrigued by this program, which is why I decided to transfer to the University of Kansas to study military history with the goal of being accepted into the program after I graduate. I am one of the lucky ones for being given this chance to come to an outstanding university and achieve my goals. My friend John Maes was not so lucky.

John Maes served in the Army Reserves in the state of Arkansas including a tour in Iraq in 2008. Mr. Maes has always been interested in the study of Archeology. The problem is that the University of Arkansas does not have an Archeology program. He wants to transfer to the University of Kansas to attend school since they offer a degree in Archeology, but he can't: He does not have the money to cover the costs above what the Post-9/11 GI Bill will pay. Since, he is not afforded the opportunity to attain his goal, he is not attending college. This bill would allow veterans just like Mr. John Maes and all other honorably discharged veterans to attain their goal of higher learning.

Service members who gave years of their young lives in the service of our beloved country deserve in-state tuition. These soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen serve not only the country as a whole but also each individual state. For example, the 142<sup>nd</sup> Combat Fires Brigade of the Arkansas Army National Guard was called into service to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The soldiers came from their homes in Arkansas to help the residents of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

Allowing honorably discharged veterans in-state tuition would bring more veterans to the state of Kansas. Being non-traditional and older students, veterans would have higher graduation rates, a vast majority of veterans are married and some have

families. Allowing in-state tuition would not only increase veteran enrollments, it would also increase the chance of the state of Kansas keeping said veterans in the state after graduation thus creating new residents and tax flow that would not be possible without giving out-of-state veterans in-state tuition. In the long term, having an increased population due to more service members staying in the state of Kansas would create a larger tax base argot more capital.

Military service is more than an individual, a state or federal government. Military service is a social contract between an individual and country. The social contract is not a one-way road. House bill 2652 would help veterans afford the education they have always dreamed of, an education they deserve. The bill would help keep veterans who graduated stay in the state of Kansas thus keeping people, jobs and money in the state of Kansas.

Thank you all for your time; it has been an honor.