

Doniphan County Education Cooperative #616

785-982-4204 Terry E. Collins, Director P.O. Box 399 Troy, KS 66087

Chair McGinn and honorable members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you here today.

I am submitting this testimony as a proponent of SB 259. Current law provides an exemption to allow teachers and other licensed professionals who retire with KPERS benefits to return to work without an earnings cap. SB 259 would extend the sunset date regarding this exemption from the \$20,000 earnings limit from July 1, 2012 to July 1, 2015.

I'd like to highlight a few key issues:

- **Even with all the recent cuts, there continues to be a shortage of teachers in Kansas.**
- **Fewer Kansas college graduates are entering the education field, particularly in special education.**
- **Special Education and related services are federally mandated.**
- **We have great teachers in this state, and other states recognize that. Major cities recruit our teachers.**
- **We recognize that KPERS long term funding problems need to be addressed.**
- **The KPERS Study Commission generally agreed that double dipping has a negligible effect because retirees and the employers have to pay a penalty into the KPERS system.**
- **Enactment of SB 259 would have no direct effect on state expenditures.**

In regular education math, science, and counseling continue to be difficult to fill positions. Some of our most experienced teachers are retired.

Special education teachers, speech pathologists, school psychologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists are very difficult to fill positions. We often have to contract with private companies or hospitals to provide these services. They are very expensive.

The earnings limitation forces the choice of either continuing working and give up the remaining KPERS benefit or stop working and continue receiving the KPERS benefit payment.

I strongly encourage you to support SB 259 and let us utilize the valuable resource of experienced, retired teachers and administrators to fill the mandated positions in order to provide the necessary services to our math, science and special education students.