



March 10, 2017

To: Caryn Tyson, Chair
Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

RE: Letter of Support – Proponent for the Senate Bill 203 to designate Cowley County as a ROZ

Dear Senate Assessment Taxation Committee,

I am writing this letter in support of approving Cowley County as a Rural Opportunity Zone (ROZ). At Cowley College, our primary mission is to provide a quality, affordable education for our students, whether their end goals are to transfer to a four-year University, or to develop skills which will prepare them for the workforce. In addition to offering quality higher education, Cowley College is a major employer in the county with approximately 200 full-time and 300 part-time employees. Cowley College pursues the finest talent available with respect to the hiring of faculty, staff and coaches. A clear benefit of receiving designation as a ROZ is an increased ability to attract high caliber employees.

While our hope is the students, whom we educate, and the staff, whom we employ, will remain in Cowley County, we realize our local workforce and overall population are declining. Young people are leaving college with more and more student loan debt and the increased need for high paying jobs. Now is the time to develop incentives which will draw former Kansans back to the state, as well as attract new citizens to our county. The ROZ initiative, if approved for Cowley County, will offer the student loan repayment and tax breaks needed to make it financially appealing to relocate to our great state.

On behalf of Cowley College, I ask that you invest in our County. Please permit the resources and opportunities to recruit the quality citizens needed to grow our workforce and improve the quality of life in the place we call home.

Please contact me at dennis.rittle@cowley.edu, if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Dennis C. Rittle, Ph.D.
Cowley College President