



KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Mark Desetti
Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Senate Bill 76
February 1, 2017

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on Senate Bill 76.

We stand in opposition to this bill for a couple of very specific reasons related to the profession of education.

First and foremost, decisions about the licensing of professional educators is in the purview of the State Board of Education. The State Board and its advisory committees determine the standards for entry into the profession. Senate Bill 76 removes much of this authority from the State Board and requires them to issue professional licenses to persons from out of state regardless of the standards held by the state issuing a certificate to that person. Some states have remarkable lax standards while others have rigorous standards. Kansas has a proud tradition of holding potential educators to very high standards and should not be called upon to license persons from other states without regard to the rigor of their preparation program.

This bill also waives licensing fees for many candidates and arbitrarily caps fees – current or future – at \$25.00. Fees today are charged so that they cover the cost of issuing the license including paying personnel to verify information, analyze the application, and communicate with the applicant. Fees waived would apply to both in-state and out-of-state applicants if they meet the income guideline or were from a military family. Without replacing that source of income, fees for others would have to increase to cover the costs but of course, the fee cap would prevent this. Handling applications would become an underfunded program.

We would also imagine that most, if not all, full-time students not claimed as dependents on a parent or guardian's tax return would meet the income requirements to qualify for the waiver of fees. This would seriously harm the agency's ability to quickly and efficiently process applications.

Our organization does not support the imposition of fees for licensure that exceed the cost of issuing the license. Fees allow the State Board to ensure that those practicing in the education profession in Kansas meet the high standards set by the Board. They do not charge more than the cost of actually issuing the license.

We would ask this Committee not to pass SB 76. Licensure of educators is best left to the state Board of Education and the Legislature should not usurp their authority in this area.