

To: House Committee on Education
Rep. Steve Huebert, Chairman
Rep. Brenda Dietrich, Vice Chairman
Rep. Jim Ward
Rep. David Benson
Rep. Stephanie Clayton
Rep. Renee Erickson
Rep. Cheryl Helmer
Rep. Steven Johnson
Rep. Jim Karleskint
Rep. Mark Samsel
Rep. Mark Schreiber
Rep. Adam Smith
Rep. Jerry Stogsdill
Rep. Adam Thomas
Rep. John Toplikar
Rep. Jene Vickrey
Rep. Rui Xu

From: Eric Grooms
2500 Lakepoint Ct.
Augusta, KS 67010
ETGLBG@AOL.COM

Re: HB No. 2144

Let me introduce myself. My name is Eric Grooms and I am a resident of Augusta and Butler County. My professional background is banking. I am currently the President of Community National Bank & Trust in Augusta. I am also an avid supporter of higher education and currently serve on the board of trustees of the Pittsburg State University Foundation. I am writing in support of HB No. 2144. Simply stated it is much needed legislation in that it provides for much needed regulations and transparency as it relates to community college operations. Butler County residents currently contribute just shy of \$15MM to Butler Community College. With this investment the citizens of Butler County whom attend Butler Community College (BCC) currently receive a discount of \$11 per credit hour. Collectively last year this resulted in an overall savings of \$416,000. Being a banker one of the things I am most interested in is return on investment. As you can see this is a dismal return on investment for the citizens of Butler County. BCC's current enrollment is made up of 20% from Butler County, 60% from Sedgwick County and the other 20% from areas outside Sedgwick or Butler County. Additionally BCC announced \$18 million of additional construction projects this past year. The first was a \$4 million culinary school to be constructed in Wichita (Sedgwick County) and the second was a \$14

million addition to their satellite campus in Andover. The college's main campus is located in El Dorado. Neither one of these projects came to fruition as WSU issued a cease and desist letter to BCC saying BCC would need WSU's approval to offer courses outside its delineated service area. BCC's service area includes the counties of Butler, Greenwood, Chase, Elk and Marion counties. In regard to the second project the mayor of Andover Ben Lawrence vetoed an ordinance creating a special use permit for the college to expand their satellite campus in Andover. The mayor cited several reasons for the veto including the fact that the college did not take a public vote on the expansion nor did they solicit public input in a formalized process. Also in 2018 the Butler County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved Resolution #1809 which was a resolution calling for a reduction of the college's property tax levy. The resolution stated that property taxes levied by the BCC Board of Trustees amount to nearly 60% of the entire property taxes levied in the county while only 3% of Butler County residents take classes at BCC. Also the modest differential in tuition rates between in county and out of county BCC students falls far short of redressing the unfair burden placed upon Butler County tax payers. The resolution further called on the Butler County Board of Trustees and Administration to take prompt and assertive steps to bring about changes in BCC's funding structure so as to ensure that local property taxes supporting BCC are reduced to reflect the actual proportion of college credit hours provided to students from Butler County. The Butler County Board of Commissioners is the voice for the citizens of this county and yet BCC has done nothing to comply with their resolution. Instead they announced the capital improvement projects I mentioned earlier. In closing I hope you will support HB No. 2144 as this bill will provide for accountability of the community colleges in the State of Kansas and their respective board of trustees to the citizens of the counties in which they reside.

Sincerely

Eric Grooms