



**TESTIMONY OF
Sarah LaFrenz, President
KANSAS ORGANIZATION OF STATE EMPLOYEES
February 20, 2019**

Chairman Rahjes and Members of the House Higher Education Budget Committee:

As President of the Kansas Organization of State Employees (KOSE), I appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 2216, introduced by Rep. Alcala, which establishes the state employee student loan repayment assistance act.

State employees are hard working, dedicated, service-oriented and do every single thing they can to expand their own educational opportunities while also performing demanding jobs with low pay, skyrocketing health insurance costs, increasing workloads, and rampant understaffing. Yet consistently I see the requirements of state employee job postings require increasing college education levels – often a Master’s degree is either preferred or even required for a potential employee to even get an interview.

As you are each no doubt aware, college costs are pricing many Kansans out of an education. State employees are not immune to this issue. If we are to attract and retain the very best employees to serve Kansans, we must ensure that every avenue is available for our State of Kansas employees to improve their current career path. Until the real issues that surround the ever-increasing costs of higher education and the corresponding debt students are being saddled with before they can even enter the workforce, HB 2216 is timely, sorely needed and very appropriate.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this written testimony.

The Kansas Organization of State Employees (KOSE) is a union for executive branch state employees, and the largest union of state employees in Kansas. All non-supervisory, non-confidential employees in the executive branch of Kansas state government (exclusive of higher education) are eligible to join KOSE. KOSE is local 300 - dually affiliated with both AFT and AFSCME. info@koseunion.org