

Kansas Educators Support Foundation
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PROPONENT Testimony on SB 383
For the House Transportation Committee
February 17, 2020
Erica Shook
Chair, Kansas Educators Support Foundation

Chairman Petersen and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony related to Senate Bill 383.

I am the English department chair at McPherson High School and a 2019 Kansas Teacher of the Year nominee. I am also the founder and chair of the Kansas Educators Support Foundation. The purpose of the foundation is to provide resources that support Kansas educators in their continued learning, professional development, instructional practice, and classroom needs.

First-year teachers have to face many challenges and can become overwhelmed very quickly. In fact, about 30% leave the profession after their first year, and 40%-50% leave within five years. A year ago, a little over 600 Kansas classrooms were lacking qualified teachers. Today, that number has grown to more than 800. One challenge for first-year teachers is simply preparing one's first classroom for students with little to no budget for supplies and no hope of a full paycheck for a month or two after school begins. Knowing this, I set out to find a way to alleviate any part of this stress in whatever manner I could. Representative Les Mason and I worked together to introduce a bill last year in January to create Kansas' first "Proud Educator" specialty license plate. That bill has been reintroduced this year as 2489 and is now HB 2592/SB 383. Grants from the proceeds of the plates will be awarded to first-year Kansas teachers for classroom supplies, professional clothing, and professional development as they begin their career.

The purposes of the "proud educator" specialty plate are these:

- the plates allow everyone in education in Kansas to show our pride in our profession;
- 100% of the proceeds will go into a fund that will allow the Kansas Educators Support Foundation and the Kansas Independent Colleges Foundation to issue grants twice a year to first-year teachers as they enter their first classroom.

I respectfully ask that you support the passage of SB 383. Schools are the foundation of every Kansas community, and educators are instrumental to those schools. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak before you about this issue. I am happy to answer further questions at your request.

Erica Shook
Kansas Educators Support Foundation, Chair