

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Barbara Lawrence at 9:00 a.m. on February 9, 2000 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes
Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department
Jackie Breymeyer, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Marvin Burris, Kansas Board of Regents
Charles Wheelen - KS Association of Osteopathic Medicine
Gary Robbins - KS Optometric Association
Terri Roberts - KS State Nurses Association
Kevin Robertson - Kansas Dental Association
Major General Gardner - Adjutant General

Others attending: See Attached List

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lawrence who stated the agenda was:

SB 381 - professional services scholarships, osteopaths, optometrists, nurses, teachers, dentists, national guard officers

Chairperson Lawrence stated that over the summer the groups involved in the bill met several times. The differences were worked out. The legislation was presented to the LEPC, which brought it to the full Senate Committee for its consideration.

Marvin Burris, Board of Regents, led off the testimony. (Attachment 1) He stated the intended changes are twofold; to streamline the administration of programs by making them consistent with one another and to update the law. Mr. Burris had an attached proposed amendment to the Ethnic Minority Fellowship Program. Ending his testimony, Mr. Burris asked for favorable consideration of the bill.

Charles Wheelen, Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine, addressed the committee and distributed his testimony. (Attachment 2) He stressed the amount of work that went into the bill and commented that all of the programs were originally created at different times when the legislature recognized a shortage in a particular career. Each program evolved separately, representing diverse interest, but this bill makes them all similar in many ways. He emphasized that the would bill not appropriate any money. He went through the sections that pertained to the osteopathic portion of the bill.

Gary Robbins, Kansas Optometric Association, submitted his testimony (Attachment 3) After completing the necessary undergraduate requirement and entrance examination, optometry students enter a four-year, post-graduate program. The program will guarantee admission and continued enrollment for Kansas students and allow Kansas students to pay in-state tuition. The association is also pleased that the bill allows for part-time practice to count toward the service obligation for the first time.

Terri Roberts, Kansas State Nurses Association, stated that this program has a unique feature in that it is a public-private partnership because it has to have a sponsoring hospital or long term care facility sponsor to qualify for the scholarship program. The language that is being added to the bill expands the nursing student scholarship eligible sponsors list to include licensed home health agencies and local health departments. (Attachment 4)

Chairperson Lawrence stated that testimony was submitted Craig Grant, representing the Kansas National Education Association. He was part of the group that met during the summer and is a strong supporter of the bill. (Attachment 5)

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE, Room 123-S Statehouse, at 9:00 a.m. on February 9, 2000.

Kevin Robertson, Kansas Dental Association, was next to address the bill. His association represents about 80% of the practicing dentists in Kansas. Federal money in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in a large number of dental graduates. These persons are now reaching retirement age. Following the withdrawal of federal money, many schools drastically reduced their class sizes. The small number of dentists under age 35 is very troubling as Kansas attempts to replace retiring dentists. This number is decreasing by about 6% a year. A chart showing data on professionally active Kansas dentists was shown in his testimony. (Attachment 6) Approximately 60% of Kansas dentists are practicing in five Kansas counties which make up 47.7% of the population. This leaves 40% of dentists to care for 52.3% of the population. Kansas has no dental school. The Kansas Board of Regents and the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education have entered into an agreement whereby the UMKC School of Dentistry accepts a total of 80 Kansas students. Indebtedness is a heavy factor influencing practice location of graduates. This forces some students to seek opportunities in the large metropolitan areas.

After several further comments, Mr. Robertson stated the creation of a dentistry service scholarship program will be a step in the right direction for oral health care in Kansas.

Major General (KS) Greg Gardner, Adjutant General, appeared on the bill. (Attachment 7) He stated that the bill will allow more flexibility in being able to move unfilled scholarships from one institution to another. It helps provide approximately one-third of the required number of lieutenants that can be put into the Kansas National Guard each year. It helps recruit and retain soldiers that serve in the state of Kansas.

Major General Gardner referred to the map at the bottom of his testimony which showed that the Kansas National Guard ranks lowest out of four surrounding states in personnel strength. This is a challenge which this bill will help to solve and urged its passage.

Seeing no opponents, the Chairperson closed the hearing on **SB 381**.

The Chairperson encouraged committee members to attend the Technology Fair on Thursday, February 10 and look up the students from their school districts. She announced the agenda for Thursday, stating the committee would meet jointly with the House to hear the Milken Foundation awardees and return to the standing committee room to hear **SB 432**.

The meeting was adjourned.