

## MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:40 p.m. on March 13, 2007, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Barbara Allen  
Carolyn McGinn- excused

Committee staff present: Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Ashley Holm, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Shirley Higgins, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Senator Roger Reitz  
Representative Anthony Brown  
Representative L. Candy Ruff  
Representative Mario Goico  
Corey Peterson, Associated General Contractors of Kansas  
Ian Staples, Student Legislative Awareness Board (SLAB)

**HB 2093 – Special education service scholarship program; limit of number of scholarships awarded, deleted**

Representative Pat Colloton submitted written testimony in support of **HB 2093**. (Attachment 1)

Senator Schodorf informed the Committee that there was no need for a hearing on **HB 2093** because the House of Representatives recently passed a bill with the same provisions.

Senator Schodorf noted that Senator Roger Reitz requested to be heard on a previously heard bill, **HB 2159** concerning the date of determination of school enrollment. Senator Reitz pointed out that the school two-count statute is the keystone to the strategy of school districts surrounding military installations since the BRAC decision two years ago. He requested that the bill not be amended as any amendments would limit and distract from the effectiveness of the measure. (Attachment 2)

**HB 2343 – Establishing the early high school graduation incentive program**

Sharon Wenger, Legislative Research Department, explained that **HB 2343** established the early high school graduation bonus and scholarship program. Students graduating from high school one year early and seeking postsecondary training as a construction trade worker would be eligible for an incentive bonus of \$1,000 to buy tools for the trade. They would also be eligible for a \$3,000 scholarship for completing a construction trade program at a technical college or vocational education school. If they do not complete the program, they must pay back the scholarship money. Ms. Wenger explained further that **HB 2209** was amended into **HB 2343** by the House. **HB 2209** exempted certain individuals from paying tuition and fees at Kansas educational institutions for up to ten semesters of undergraduate instruction. These individuals are those who graduated from high school in Kansas or received a GED as a resident of Kansas and served in the United States military in Iraq or Afghanistan after September 11, 2001, for at least 90 days or served less than 90 days because of injuries received in Iraq or Afghanistan. The fiscal note on the original bill estimated \$1.0 million for the incentive bonuses and \$3.0 million for the scholarships for the early high school graduation bonus and scholarship program. Because students participating in this program would not be enrolled in high school for one year, cost savings in state aid could amount to \$4,374,000. The fiscal note on **HB 2209** estimates that 700 of the 2,800 soldiers would apply for this tuition waiver. Based on this information, the fiscal effect of the bill would be \$3,360,000 a year from the State General Fund. In addition, the Board would need one full-time position to administer the program at a cost of \$47,000 per year.

Representative Anthony Brown testified in support of **HB 2343**. He noted that the bill does not mold the student to the system's need but rather is student focused. He further noted that less than 40 percent of all jobs require a Bachelor's Degree, and administrators acknowledge a need for change. Well-educated no longer means university education, and the marketplace is changing with less careers demanding traditional education. He concluded the bill would allow Kansas to meet the needs of the student, which would make

## CONTINUATION SHEET

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Kansas more competitive. ([Attachment 3](#))

Representative L. Candy Ruff testified in support of **HB 2343**. She explained that the bill was created for a small group of students who may respond at the beginning of high school to the idea of taking summer courses in order to graduate in three years and enter the construction/building trades profession. She noted that the building trade skills listed in the bill have apprentice programs in Kansas awaiting students who complete their training in one of the community college or vocational/technical training school construction programs. The intent of the bill was to prepare workers with the initial skills needed to enter the apprentice programs offered in Kansas. She commented that the bill would begin the process of recognizing that not all high school students must attend college in order to be successful. She informed the Committee that the bill received unanimous approval in the House. ([Attachment 4](#))

Representative Mario Goico testified in support of the amendment of **HB 2009** into **HB 2343** by the House. In his opinion, the bill would be an incentive for Kansas veterans to return home, would help ensure that Kansas will continue to have a strong workforce and a viable economy, and would provide a higher quality of life for Kansas veterans. He believes that the Board of Regents' estimate that 700 of the eligible 2,800 soldiers would apply for the tuition waiver was very high. ([Attachment 5](#))

Corey Peterson, Associated General Contractors of Kansas, testified in support of **HB 2343**. He noted that demographics show that the construction industry will be losing a significant portion of its skilled workforce in the next five years due to retirement. He pointed out that there has been a stigma attached to the construction industry that it is not a good career, but the construction industry does provide good paying jobs, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. In addition, he noted that parents and teachers tend to focus on getting students prepared for four year colleges and overlook technical education and the rewarding careers industries like construction have to offer. The bill would increase awareness of the opportunities in technical careers. ([Attachment 6](#))

Ian Staples, Student Legislative Awareness Board (SLAB), testified in support of **HB 2343**. He noted that the bill essentially meets the same goals of benefitting men and women in uniform as a bill he introduced in early February, **HB 2427**. The goal of his bill was to supplement the benefits given to veterans under the Montgomery GI Bill as these benefits have fallen behind the overall price of higher education. He suggested that **HB 2343** be amended to include the cost of living, books, fees, and other expenses. He also suggested that the bill be amended to expand the definition of eligible participants to include any soldier, sailor, or Marine serving in any active combat zone after September 11, 2001. ([Attachment 7](#))

There being no others wishing to testify, the hearing on **HB 2343** was closed.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2007.