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Quality Learning Opportunities

March 15, 2018

Chair Baumgardner, Members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Linda Fund, and I am the Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Community College Trustees. On behalf of our nineteen-member community colleges, I am submitting written testimony in favor of HB 2541. We have had Guard utilize the scholarship on our campuses and we believe it is a great program for them, for our colleges and for our state.

We support the Kansas National Guard Educational Assistance Program and these amendments contained in HB 2541. The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce indicates that by 2025, almost two out of three jobs in the nation will require at least some postsecondary education or training. This bill can help more Kansans get that important postsecondary education.

It is clear that the colleges and the Guard share many common goals and that this program:

- supports the Kansas Board of Regents' initiative to keep college/university graduates in the state in order to produce a "brain gain";
- helps provide Kansas employers with a more educated workforce; and
- supports higher education and the Guard by incentivizing Guard service to the state.

By investing in higher education for Guard members, the investment will educate Kansans, as 90% of Kansas Guardsmen live in the state and are, like our community college students, much more likely to remain in the state of Kansas.

The bill also encourages service members to attend in-state institutions and makes the Kansas Guard competitive with surrounding states by providing 100% funding for eligible Guard tuition and fees.

HB 2541 improves the Kansas National Guard Educational Assistance Program by clarifying eligibility, capping the tuition and fees at the rate of the highest Kansas public higher educational institution, requiring participants to leverage federal tuition assistance before receiving state tuition assistance,

all actions that will make Kansas tax dollars go farther. In addition, it requires two years of Guard service in exchange for the scholarship aid given.

Our colleges fully support those who serve our state and country and welcome them to our campuses which provide them a quality education at the best possible rate of tuition and fees for them and for the State.

We are glad to support and be a part of this important initiative.



Respectfully submitted,

Linda Fund, Executive Director
Kansas Association of Community College Trustees