

Chairman Johnson and Members of the House Taxation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to convey Ottawa University's support for House Bill 2541. We encourage the committee to recommend the bill favorably for passage.

Ottawa University

Ottawa University was founded in 1865 in Ottawa, Kansas and is affiliated with the American Baptist Churches USA since 1905. We are student-centered, rooted firmly in teaching excellence, value-priced and technology-enabled. We expect to be an extraordinarily effective and distinctive institution of higher learning which is pursuing its mission within caring, Christ-inspired communities of grace characterized by collegiality, openness, and inclusiveness.

Ottawa enrolls over 4,000 students on five campuses and online. The institution also has more than 22,000 living alumni around the world.

Support for HB 2541

On average, Ottawa University pays approximately \$80,000 in credit card surcharge fees each year. I joined the university in 2009, and this line item has increased measurably under my tenure as Chief Financial Officer of the institution.

Because Ottawa cannot pass these fees on to the students who choose to use credit cards to pay their tuition, we are forced to raise tuition on all students in order to cover the cost of these surcharges. Thus, all students are forced to pay for the choices of only a subset of the student population.

Because our peer institutions – public universities in Kansas and private colleges mostly in Missouri – are not forced to absorb these fees, Ottawa is challenged to compete for students in ways that make it attractive and affordable for Kansans to stay here for college and for out-of-state students to come here.

While not a silver bullet for our challenges, passage of HB 2541 would provide us a chance to compete on a level playing field and reduce pressure on tuition costs across the board.

Thank you for your consideration.



Clark Ribordy
Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer
Ottawa University

1001 South Cedar Street • Ottawa, KS 66067 • 785.248.2353 • www.ottawa.edu