



**NEUTRAL Testimony on SB 47
For the Senate Education Committee
February 18, 2019
Matt Lindsey
President, Kansas Independent College Association**

Chair Baumgardner and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to come before you to provide neutral testimony related to Senate Bill 47.

Kansas' Independent Colleges:

I am the President of the Kansas Independent College Association (KICA). KICA represents the nineteen independent colleges of Kansas, all of whom are not-for-profit institutions of higher education, all of whom offer undergraduate degrees, and all of whom are regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

While we use the word “independent” to describe our colleges and universities, in casual language, one can substitute “private” or “nonprofit.” Each of our institutions are separately governed by their own board of trustees and we are not governed by, coordinated by, or required to obtain further authorization from the Kansas Board of Regents. “Independent” also reflects the fact that our colleges receive no direct institutional funds from the state of Kansas, or from county or local property taxes. The only public funding that typically flows to our colleges comes to us from our students themselves, via student grants and scholarships and federal student aid programs.

Comments on SB 47:

Kansas' independent colleges and universities do enroll a small number of “early” high school completers from Kansas high schools. If the State elects to pursue the policy intended by SB 47, the KICA institutions are appreciative of the language in Section 1(h)(2) that includes a clear definition of higher education institutions at which an eligible student can attend.

The definition emphasizes that the institutions must be either public or non-profit, primarily based in Kansas, and regionally accredited. Thus, it ensures that scholarship funds flow only to accountable public and non-profit institutions, that those funds stay in Kansas, and that the institutions meet the highest accreditation (i.e. quality) standard available.

While KICA appreciates the bill sponsor's attention to this important definitional issue, KICA does not feel qualified to comment on the overall design of the scholarship envisioned in SB 47 nor the bill's impact on the suitable provision of funding for the state's K-12 educational institutions.

We appreciate the inclusion in this conversation. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you on this issue. I am happy to answer any questions you may have or provide additional data as you request.