



Johnson County Community College Testimony in Support of SB 215:

Transferring the authority for postsecondary driver's education programs and driver training schools from the Board of Regents to the Department of Revenue.

My name is Jimmy Bowie, and I am the Program Coordinator for Transportation Programs at Johnson County Community College, overseeing Driver's Education, Motorcycle Training and Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Training. During my three years in this role, I have often referred to Kansas Statutes 8-272 through 8-279 which this bill seeks to modify. We support the changes identified in this bill.

JCCC operates all three of the driver training programs addressed in this bill, however, each program is treated differently in terms of classification and eligibility for state reimbursement. This is due in part to the language used to introduce each section of the statute pertaining to the different program areas.

This bill clearly defines the role of community colleges conducting Motorcycle Training and Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training and state training reimbursement eligibility. However, the bill and existing statutes are less clear regarding driver's education. Senate Bill 215 allows only the options of a driver's education program belonging to a school district, accredited non-public school, or a commercial business. The option for community colleges to provide driver's education is not considered in this bill. While we support the bill overall, we would ask for language to include community colleges.

In 2021, the Kansas Department of Education determined, through their interpretation of K.S.A 8-272, that community colleges are commercial businesses and will be regulated as such. The reason for this determination is because the language in the statute requires that schools must be accredited by the state Board of Education. The Board of Education does not accredit community colleges. Without the use of the similar language used in the other sections of this bill to identify community colleges as providers of Motorcycle Training and CDL training, Senate Bill 215 was amended to designate community colleges to be treated in the same manner as Motorcycle Training and CDL, for driver education courses for students 19 years of age and under.

We think it is important moving forward that the State proactively address and support the role community colleges can play in providing driver's education and other hands-on training in the State. Public school driver education programs are no longer offered in many school districts and those that are offered are not always able to meet the demand. Community colleges bridge the gap between a public-school experience and a commercial option, while maintaining high quality educational opportunities.

SB 215, as amended in the Senate Education Committee, provides the designation as a public-school provider of driver's education, making community colleges would be eligible for training reimbursement. This reimbursement will allow us to serve more students and create safer roads for our State. Thank you for your work on this bill and we urge your support for SB 215.