

Kansas Families for Education

Demanding Excellent Public Schools for All

Testimony HB2139

Education Committee– February 24, 2015

Kathy Cook, Board Member on behalf of Kansas Families for Education

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. This testimony is on behalf of Kansas Families for Education and we submit this testimony in opposition to HB 2139. Kansas Families for Education is a statewide organization made up of parents, educators, taxpayers, students, and other Kansans committed to equity and excellence in our public schools.

In-state tuition benefits students who are residents of this state, whose parents pay taxes, and who pay taxes themselves. These young people have achieved the graduation requirements of a Kansas high school, which is no small feat, given our state's high educational standards and the poverty in which many of these young people live. And these young people are PAYING tuition at our universities.

We contend that to deny students access to higher learning is not only detrimental to them as individuals, but detrimental to our state and our economy. Our business community is faced with many challenges and our businesses must be equipped with a well educated workforce prepared to meet those challenges. Our best strategy for ensuring that we will have the human capital we need in the future is to grow it ourselves, and we negate the importance of a well educated workforce when we attempt to deny Kansas students, any Kansas student the opportunity for a college education.

If these students are denied in-state tuition it would take dollars away from our already under funded higher educational institutions. Many of the students are only able to afford higher education at the in-state cost, and could not attend or spend their money at Kansas universities if charged the out of state tuition rates.

The Kansas in-state tuition law has been challenged in court on numerous occasions and upheld every time. We see no logical, rational, or legal reason to repeal in-state tuition. In fact, we maintain that education is a basic human right and the bedrock of our success as a state. We believe that the majority of Kansans embrace our immigrant population and want the students that are sitting side by side with our children in our K-12 classrooms to have the same opportunities to live the American dream by attending post secondary institutions.

We don't stand alone in support of in-state tuition, our view that this policy makes good economic sense is shared by both Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio. We urge you to oppose House Bill 2139 and show your support for the love of freedom and the American Dream, a dream in which these immigrant children fervently share.

Thank you.