AN ACT concerning taxation; relating to certain income tax credits for graduates of aerospace and aviation-related educational programs and their employers.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

Section 1. As used in sections 1 through 4, and amendments thereto:

(a) "Aerospace" means relating to vehicles or objects for the purpose of suborbital, orbital or space flight, whether for private or public, or civil or defense-related purposes.

(b) "Aviation" means relating to vehicles or objects, except parachutes, for the purpose of controlled flight through the air, regardless of how propelled or controlled, or whether manned or unmanned, whether for private or public, or civil or defense-related purposes.

(c) "Aviation sector" means a private or public organization engaged in the manufacture of aviation or aerospace hardware or software, aviation or aerospace maintenance, aviation or aerospace repair and overhaul, supply of parts to the aviation or aerospace industry, provision of services and support relating to the aviation or aerospace industry, research and development of aviation or aerospace technology and systems, and the education and training of aviation or aerospace personnel.

(d) "Compensation" means payments in the form of contract labor for which the payor is required to provide a federal tax form 1099 to the person paid, wages subject to withholding tax paid to a part-time employee or full-time employee, or salary or other remuneration. "Compensation" shall not include employer-provided retirement, medical or healthcare benefits, reimbursement for travel, meals, lodging or any other expense.

(e) "Institution" means a state educational institution, municipal university, institute of technology, community college or technical college, as those terms are defined in K.S.A. 74-3201b, and amendments thereto, or any other public or private college or university that is accredited by a national accrediting body.

(f) "Qualified employee" means any person newly employed by or first contracting with a qualified employer on or after January 1, 2018, who has been awarded an undergraduate or graduate degree, or a technical degree or certificate from a qualified program by an institution.

(g) "Qualified employer" means a sole proprietorship, general
partnership, limited partnership, limited liability company, corporation, other legally recognized business entity or public entity whose principal business activity involves the aviation sector.

(h) "Qualified program" means: (1) A program that has been accredited by the engineering accreditation commission of the accreditation board for engineering and technology (ABET) and that awards an undergraduate or graduate degree; or (2) a program within the meaning of an associate of applied science degree program or career technical education program, as those programs are defined in K.S.A. 72-4412, and amendments thereto, which results in the awarding of a degree or certificate that prepares the graduate for gainful employment directly involved in the manufacturing of unmanned aircraft systems or of principal components of unmanned aircraft systems.

(i) "Tuition" means the amount paid for enrollment and instruction in a qualified program. "Tuition" shall not include the cost of books, fees or room and board.

(j) "Unmanned aircraft system" means an unmanned vehicle or object for the purpose of flight through the air that is operated and controlled without direct human intervention from inside or on the vehicle or object and includes the associated support equipment, control station, software, data links, telemetry, communications and navigation equipment necessary for operation.

Sec. 2. (a) For taxable years beginning after December 31, 2017, a qualified employer subject to the tax imposed under the provisions of the Kansas income tax act shall be allowed a credit against the tax for tuition reimbursed to a qualified employee.

(b) The credit may be claimed only if the qualified employee has been awarded an undergraduate or graduate degree, or technical degree or certificate from a qualified program within one year of commencing employment with the qualified employer and may be claimed each year thereafter that the qualified employee remains employed up to the fourth year of employment.

(c) The credit shall be in an amount equal to 50% of the tuition reimbursed during the taxable year for which the credit is claimed to a qualified employee, except that in no event shall the credit exceed 50% of the average annual amount paid by a qualified employee for enrollment and instruction in a qualified program at a state educational institution in Kansas.

(d) The credit shall not be used to reduce the tax liability of the qualified employer to less than zero.

Sec. 3. (a) For taxable years beginning after December 31, 2017, a qualified employer subject to the tax imposed under the provisions of the Kansas income tax act shall be allowed a credit against the tax for
compensation paid during the taxable year to a qualified employee in the first through fifth consecutive years of employment. Except as otherwise provided, the credit shall be in an amount equal to:

(1) Ten percent of the compensation paid if the qualified employee graduated from an institution located in this state; or

(2) five percent of the compensation paid if the qualified employee graduated from an institution located outside the state.

(b) The credit shall not exceed $15,000 annually for each qualified employee, if the qualified employee graduated from an institution located in this state, or $7,500 annually for each qualified employee, if the qualified employee graduated from an institution located outside this state.

(c) The credit shall not be used to reduce the tax liability of the qualified employer to less than zero.

(d) No credit shall be claimed for compensation paid to a qualified employee after the fifth year of employment of the qualified employee.

Sec. 4. (a) For taxable years beginning after December 31, 2017, a taxpayer who becomes a qualified employee during the taxable year shall be allowed a credit against the tax imposed under the provisions of the Kansas income tax act in an amount equal to $5,000. The credit shall be deducted from the taxpayer's income tax liability for the taxable year in which the taxpayer is or has been a qualified employee and may be claimed each year the taxpayer achieves the status of a qualified employee for the four taxable years succeeding the taxable year in which the credit was first allowed.

(b) If the amount of the credit allowed a qualified employee is greater than the qualified employee's income tax liability for the taxable year in which the credit is allowed, the amount of the credit which exceeds the tax liability may be carried over for deduction from the qualified employee's income tax liability in the next succeeding taxable year or years, except that the tax credit may not be carried over for deduction after the fourth taxable year succeeding the taxable year in which the credit was first allowed.

Sec. 5. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.