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NEUTRAL TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 437

Establishing the Kansas education enrichment program to provide educational awards to elementary and secondary school students for qualifying expenses for educational goods and services.

**Presented to the Senate Committee on Education
By Kansas State Treasurer Steven Johnson**

February 14, 2024

Chair Baumgardner and Members of the Committee:

Senate Bill 437 would establish the Kansas Education Enrichment Program (KEEP) within the Office of the State Treasurer. The program would provide eligible students with the opportunity to receive two separate payments of \$1,000 – one payment while the student is in grades K-8, and a second payment when the student is in grades 9-12. The funds could be used for certain qualifying educational expenses, including private tutoring, assistive technology and educational summer camps.

Our understanding of this bill is that it codifies the similar program that was created by the Office of Recovery and used funds directed by the SPARK Committee in recent years. That program used a third-party vendor to administer the accounts, and this bill anticipates that a vendor would also be selected to administer the program under our office.

While the decision of whether to codify and continue this program, and what level of funding is appropriate to appropriate is for the Legislature, our office stands ready to select a qualified vendor to manage the program if this bill is enacted. The Treasurer's Office has experience in overseeing the state's 529 education savings program (Learning Quest) as well as the KIDS matching grant program and the ABLE savings program for Kansans with disabilities.

Thank you for your hard work to balance spending priorities with sustainable tax relief for Kansans.

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