



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

House Appropriations Committee
Testimony Regarding SB 161
March 31, 2015
Andy Tompkins

Good morning Chairman Ryckman and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 161.

During the 2005 Session, the Legislature enacted K.S.A. 76-715a, allowing the Board of Regents to authorize state universities to convert all or part of their classified staff employee positions to unclassified university support staff (USS) positions. The purpose of this statute was to provide universities with the flexibility in pay and job title administration for these employees, while retaining classified staff benefits, including those for annual leave.

The following Session, in 2006, the Legislature enacted K.S.A. 76-715b, authorizing the Board to determine annual leave time for state university classified employees, not to exceed the amount of annual leave the universities provide to their unclassified employees. The bill did not mention USS employees, and at that time the employees at only one campus had voted to convert to USS.

In 2012, the Board sought and obtained an opinion from the Attorney General addressing whether these two statutes, read together, would enable the Board to determine the annual leave benefits of USS employees as it may for classified employees under K.S.A. 76-715b. The Attorney General opined that, because of the way the two statutes are written, the Board could not do so.

During the period from 2012 to 2014, all remaining classified staff at all of the state universities voted to convert to USS positions. Because K.S.A. 76-715b applies only to classified employees, the addition of university support staff to the statute is required to grant to the Board the same authority with regard to leave time that it had when these positions were classified.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of SB 161. Please let me know if you have any questions.

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