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Testimony before House Education Committee
HB 2203 – Consolidation of Administrative Services
Presented by Mike O’Neal – Kansas Chamber CEO
(Written only)

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee

On behalf of The Kansas Chamber, I appreciate the opportunity to provide our written **support** for HB 2203, a proposal to facilitate the consolidation of K-12 administrative services.

The Kansas Chamber, through its Board-approved Legislative Agenda, supports increasing the quality of education for tomorrow’s workforce and the efficient use of tax dollars through policies that, among other things, **“support a suitable school finance system for K-12 education that ensures taxpayer dollars are adequately and efficiently invested toward instruction in order to provide students and teachers with the resources needed to fulfill the mission of the Department of Education.”**

The Kansas Chamber commissions an Annual Competitiveness Index study on a variety of topics, including public education. Education spending continues to be a Kansas priority, but efficiency needs prioritization, the study reveals, particularly at the administrative level. Kansas administrative spending as a percent of total K-12 spending persistently exceeds the U.S. average – 15% above. Between 2005 and 2008 there were signs of improvement with a narrowing gap. 2009 saw a rise in both Kansas and the U.S. average, but 2010 has seen a widening gap again due to rising spending in Kansas relative to a flat U.S. average.

While good leadership is important, much of what is spent on non-instructional expense in Kansas is neither a function of leadership nor a function of educational performance. A dollar spent on unnecessary or redundant second and third tier administration, e.g., is a dollar lost to the classroom. This summer and fall the K-12 Efficiency and Performance Commission heard about a number of opportunities for efficiencies in K-12 administration. With the level of expenditure transparency we now enjoy, it is relatively easy to compare administrative expenditures district by district and some of the administrative to pupil FTE disparities among districts are rather alarming and beg attention.

Anything that incentivizes reducing the administrative footprint and related costs, in favor of prioritizing funding to the classroom will earn the appreciation and support of Kansas families and businesses, the latter of which are the ultimate consumers of the educational product of the state. HB 2203 is a step in the right direction.



“...to continually strive to improve the economic climate for the benefit of every business and citizen and to safeguard our system of free, competitive enterprise”.