

**Testimony to House Education Committee
In Opposition to HB 2139**

**Greg Delort
Professor, Manhattan Christian College; Minister
February 24, 2015**

Dear Chairman Highland and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Greg Delort and I am currently employed as a professor at Manhattan Christian College in Manhattan, KS. I also have served as a youth minister and campus minister in Illinois. Our family has membership at University Christian Church in Manhattan. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to address a committee so vital to our development as people in the state of Kansas and in the United States.

In my reading of Scripture, I see very early on that there is an openness to those seen as outside of God's people. In Exodus "foreigners" who gave evidence of wanting to become part of God's people were invited to do so. About those who showed commitment Exodus 13:49 says, "The same law applies to both the native-born and to the foreigner residing among you." This is not indicative of a boundary-less people but conveys an invitation to become part of a larger people with demonstrated commitment.

The theme introduced in the exodus continues through the rest of the Bible. In the New Testament several stories illustrate this, many more than can be cited here. One example is Paul himself who was outside of God's people and persecuted them. He was invited to become part of God's people and became the author of the majority of the New Testament. Another example is found in Onesimus, a slave who had run away. He had an advocate in Paul who asked Philemon to receive him back as a brother now that he made a commitment to be one of God's people. The last chapter of the Bible, Revelation 22, includes this invitation, "And let the one who hears say, 'Come! Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.'"

I am reminded of President Reagan's accurate use of a biblical metaphor, the city on a hill or "shining city" from Matthew 5. In his farewell speech he said, "If there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here." I would add that the doors are open to those who demonstrate commitment to being here. Those who apply for legal status are demonstrating commitment to being here and to eventually sharing the many responsibilities of U.S. citizens.

As Kansans and Americans we have a unique opportunity to offer options that others simply will not or cannot. Providing in-state tuition for young people who have attended three years at a Kansas high school, graduate from high school, and show commitment to being in the United States by applying for legal status or citizenship is an investment rather than a cost. This investment is not only in the individuals it is also an investment in the state of Kansas and an investment in the United States. I believe HB2139 would mitigate the relational, educational,

and economic profits of this investment. I urge that this committee would recommend continuing the provision of a fair opportunity for in-state tuition to those affected by this legislation.

Respectfully,

Gregory A. Delort, Ph.D., BCCC, BCPC, CFLE