



MainStream Coalition
5960 Dearborn Street, #213
Mission, Kansas 66202-9905

★ Rational Voices for Irrational Times ★

913-649-3326 • www.mainstreamcoalition.org

Testimony to House Education Committee

Chair, Representative Ron Highland at ron.highland@house.ks.gov

Tuesday, May 5, 2015 Committee Meeting, 1:30 PM Room 112-N

Sue Mollenkamp, Committee Assist, 785-296-7310, sue.mollenkamp@house.ks.gov

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Position – OPPOSE

Higher Education Degree Prospectus Unfunded Mandate ([SB 193](#))

Chairman Highland and Committee Members,

Please accept this written testimony in opposition to SB 193, regarding the proposed reporting requirements for higher education degree programs. MainStream Coalition is a non-partisan, grassroots organization. We grew from an outpouring of concerns over the infringement of governmental separation of powers and of church and state. For over two decades now, we have worked to advocate for state policies that perpetuate good governance and traditional Kansas moderate values.

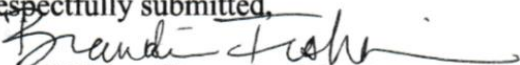
In alignment with our mission, MainStream has submitted testimony to raise three concerns regarding this proposed bill.

- **Unfunded Mandate.** The proposed list of post-school outcomes to be gathered for each degree program is extensive and an expensive evaluation undertaking, particularly if legislators' intended use for the data are to assess program impact. Although the legislature has indicated some financial incentive for survey participants, no allocation of budget has been noted for the development of the evaluation program, nor the ongoing implementation, analyses and reporting of the outcome data. This regulatory bill is an unfunded mandate.
- **Lacks Clear Separation of Powers.** SB 193 reflects a fair degree of legislative over-reach, overlapping with the constitutional obligations and established goals of our appointed Board of Regents. In September 2010, the Regents approved a 10-year strategic agenda for the state's public higher education system. Entitled *Foresight 2020*, the plan established long-range achievement goals that are measurable, reportable, and ensures the state's higher education system meets Kansans' expectations. Four years of reporting are now available to review progress. A redesign of the overall strategic plan structure in 2012 reduced the number of strategic goals from six to three, yet retained many of the original measures: 1) increase higher education attainment among Kansans, 2) improve alignment of the state's higher education system with the needs of the economy, and 3) ensure state university excellence. The proposed statutory regulation (SB 193) conflicts with the Regents strategic agenda and is unnecessary, wasteful and fails to respect constitutional separation of powers.

- **Upside-Down Priorities.** Imposing high stakes accountability on our post-secondary institutions, while repeatedly cutting state funding for student tuition and other operational functions is highly suspect. Expecting more for less is neither realistic, nor sustainable. University of Kansas Chancellor Gray-Little recently reported that Kansas “has incrementally but consistently disinvested in higher education to the point that it is now significantly challenging the University of Kansas’ ability to serve Kansans and society. When adjusted for inflation, per-student state support for KU has [declined nearly 40 percent](#) over the past 15 years. Thus, KU students now pay the majority of the cost of their education.”

We urge this committee to oppose SB 193.

Respectfully submitted,



Brandi Fisher, Executive Director

MainStream Coalition and Education Foundation