



Deborah Williams
Testimony, HB 2531
House Education Committee
February 9, 2016

My name is Deborah Williams and I am writing in opposition to House Bill 2531. I am a lifetime resident of Kansas and career educator with 21 years of higher education teaching experience.

There are many reasons why I oppose HB 2531. My testimony will attempt to identify several points I would like for you to consider.

FIRST, the bill is unnecessary. Johnson County Community College (JCCC) contract provides a mechanism for removing professors when their performance is substandard. However, that protection can be changed or removed altogether at the whim of a future JCCC Board of Trustees. Although the current practice of my institution is valuable it is not as thoroughly tested or dependable as the current Kansas Statute which requires professional dismissal only with substantial evidence that is not arbitrary or capricious.

SECOND, the community college environment is a unique workplace. Kansas law does not provide absolute job security at any level including JCCC. Achieving non-probationary status is a stringent process. It requires training, mentoring, and demonstrated proficiency. At JCCC there is a required peer review process. This mechanism provides support and guidance to faculty to ensure they are equipped to deliver a high quality education experience. Only after proving professional competence can a JCCC professor achieve non-probationary status.

THIRD, colleges are a place where ingenuity is nurtured and rewarded. That trait directly translates into economic gains for the State of Kansas. Colleges have been rightly described as a “free market place of ideas” that positively impact the States’ economic health. Faculty members help develop strong student achievement and have brought positive national recognition to Johnson County and JCCC. Highly qualified professionals secure in their work environments ensure a level of inquiry and innovation that reward not only themselves but the institution, the community, and the State’s economic activities.

JCCC faculty are expected to perform at a high level and have demonstrated for the past several decades their commitment to their students, profession and their institution. To suggest that JCCC will continue to shine as a national beacon of community colleges success in an environment where professional careers can be cut short at the whim of an unhappy student or parent is inconsistent with the institutions long history of supporting professional development and student success.

Finally, while people in this room may disagree on ideological points we can all surely find common ground on the most important goals of the business of education: promoting high quality educational delivery, enabling faculty to facilitate and inspire innovation in the classroom and preparing students for success in the workforce and their chosen careers. To support these goals, you must vote against HB 2531.