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Terry Forsyth, testimony  
Senate Education Committee  
Senate Bill 2  
January 22, 2015

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee - thank you for the opportunity to talk with you about Senate Bill 2. We rise at this time with a neutral position on the bill.

Last year, the legislature took job security away from Kansas teachers. The actions taken then allow a teacher to be non-renewed without a reason and teachers so non-renewed have no administrative remedy or opportunity to challenge the non-renewal. Last year's legislation makes teachers at-will employees and wipes out any sense of job security.

Allowing for two or three-year contracts would provide a modicum of job security and we imagine would give teachers granted such contracts ease.

What concerns us about the bill as drafted is that the granting of such contracts is optional. There are no criteria under which such contracts would be granted or denied.

In order for such a plan to be successful, it would be critical that a district interested in providing these contracts would sit down and negotiate how the program would be implemented.

If it is left to the individual principal to determine - What happens when a principal in one school gives multi-year contracts to all the teachers and the principal in a neighboring school gives none? What happens when there are arbitrary limits on how many teachers may have multi-year contracts? What happens when no one understands how individual teachers are chosen in the granting of multi-year contracts?

These issues create morale problems that do tremendous harm.

Job security helps people focus on doing their best rather than worrying about whether or not they will be around. But such plans imposed on others without an understanding of how these plans work or perceived as unfairly applied, cause problems.

The devil here, is in the implementation.