



Testimony before the
Senate Committee on Education
on
SB 176 - relating to limits on negotiations with professional employees' organizations
by

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Mr, Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to **SB 176**. As we understand the bill, it would limit the mandatory topics of negotiations between local school boards and teachers to “exclusively mean the minimum amount of salaries and wages, including pay for duties under supplemental contracts.” Current agreements would be allowed to expire but after that, the agreements could not be extended or renewed, or continue to be in effect. The bill removes impasse procedures for mediation and fact finding, and would allow the board to issue a unilateral contract after impasse is reached on June 1.

Two years ago, legislation in the Kansas House brought this issue to the forefront. The chairman of the committee and the organizations agreed the issue should be delayed for at least one session to determine if compromise could be reached with all parties to negotiations.

An agreement was reached approximately one month ago. The KASB Board of Directors, under authority from the Delegate Assembly, voted unanimously to approve that agreement, and to support no other changes in the Professional Negotiations Act. The boards of KNEA, USA-Kansas and KSSA took the same action. That compromise was introduced as **SB 136**, which you heard last week.

We appear today as opponents of the **SB 176** for the following reasons.

First, it goes far beyond the terms of the agreement reached with the Kansas National Education Association, United School Administrators of Kansas and the Kansas School Superintendents Association.

Second, the bill removes the process of mediation and fact-finding, which our members have never voted to support.

Third, the bill appears to preclude negotiations over any topics other than the minimum amount of salaries and wages, including pay for duties under supplemental contracts. (Page 9, lines 11-13) The position adopted by our members specifically supports allowing boards and teachers to mutually agree to additional topics.

Fourth, the bill appears to terminate all current contract language approved before July 1, 2015. We have received conflicting legal opinions over the ability of the Legislature to unilaterally terminate contract agreements. Our leadership believed the agreement in **SB 136**, which limited the number of items that must be negotiated each year, was more certain than the possibility of extended litigation over legislative action to terminate contracts. We note boards already have the ability to issue unilateral contracts under current law.

All four organizations are committed to giving the system adopted in **SB 136** a chance to succeed before considering further changes such as those represented in **SB 176**.

Thank you for your consideration.