

**Written Testimony Neutral to SB 299 substitute**  
**Jason Crawford, Superintendent USD 283 Elk Valley**

Members of the Senate Select Committee on KPERS,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important bill regarding working after retirement in the KPERS system. I currently serve as the superintendent/principal for Elk Valley Schools located in the community of Longton, Kansas in Elk County. Currently our district employs 19 certified staff members of which 12 would be directly impacted by the change to the current working after retirement exemption. Our school employs many long time veteran teachers who are strongly tied to the community with an average tenure of 26 years of service to the district.

The following positions would be impacted.

Secondary SPED

K-12 Physical Education

8-12 Science

K-12 Music and Band

CTE Family and Consumer Science

Drafting Teacher and Tech Coordinator for District

8-12 English

2 Elementary teachers

K-12 Spanish

1 reading specialist/grant coordinator for district

I appreciate your time and effort on addressing a long-term fix to the WAR aspect of KPERS. As presented the proposed rules would be devastating to our situation in Elk Valley. Our district relies heavily on the individuals above who would fall outside the proposed changes for SB 299 and chose to continue to live and retire in our community.

I ask that the committee take into consideration a local option fix to the issue that would be cost neutral to the KPERS plan. Why not allow the committee to determine the true actuary costs to KPERS and allow local school boards to pay the estimated 23-25% actual actuary cost of allowing retired employees to return to work? This would allow local school boards the opportunity to make these decisions based on current local needs and the rate could be adjusted as the costs fluctuate and determined by the plan. Local school boards need many flexible options to put a qualified teaching candidate into the classroom when they have exhausted all other avenues, many times which are in July and August.

It is hard to develop a legislative long-term fix when needs and demands are constantly changing across the state in education. Please keep in the spirit of this session in finding less intrusive ways for government to fix problems and return options to our locally elected officials. The current proposed legislation creates a punitive burden especially on smaller rural districts and ultimately impacts the quality of the education for our rural school children.

Our situation in Elk Valley is very reflective of the future crisis emerging in which more school districts will face as the number of qualified teachers continued to diminish in rural districts across our great State.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to address any questions from the committee at this time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jason Crawford