KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Terry Forsyth, KNEA
Senate Select Committee on KPERS
SB 299
April 29, 2015

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today regarding SB 299.

Retirees are a valuable resource to school districts as they struggle to secure teachers for their classrooms. Many districts currently benefit from retirees who have returned to work following their retirement. Extending the current law for another three years appeals to both teachers nearing the end of their professional careers and the districts that hire them after retirement. The current climate does not support extending the current provisions of Working after Retirement. SB 299, as we understand it, changes the current provisions of post retirement employment for teachers and employees whose work qualifies them to enroll in the KPERS system. While we support many of the features of the new bill, it remains difficult to testify either as a Proponent or an Opponent without reviewing the bill in written form.

We support the provisions that prohibit pre-arrangements for particular positions, the 60-day waiting period before returning to work, and grandfathering in currently retired Licensed School Professionals who are working after retirement. Without reading a bill, it is difficult to support changing to a “cap based system” from the current provisions of Working after Retirement. More time is required to review the bill and test potential unintended consequences to the change in provisions.

We would encourage you to change the date from May 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 to give formal notice of retirement to be grandfathered in to the current system. Given that the proposed bill states that the rules will take effect 7/1/2016 it would give teachers another year to consider their options. While we have not executed a formal poll among teachers preparing to retire, we know from numerous calls and conversations that many teachers are waiting for the final changes to Working after Retirement before they will give formal notice.

We are also concerned that the employers paying the actuarial rate plus 8% will not meet the requirements to not put the KPERS system in a deficit regarding those who Work after Retirement. We would need to know the definition of “unretired” as it would read in the bill to further understand the potential implications of a teacher being declared “unretired.” It is problematic to have a district declare a position as a “hardship” position and then not be able to hire the last person in the position to work after retirement.

The bill seems to encourage teachers to work more years before they retire as a consequence of changing the current Working after Retirement provisions.

We would respectfully ask the committee to give us time to read the bill in written form in order to give a more detailed testimony given the importance of the impact of these changes on all KPERS eligible employees.