

SESSION OF 2002

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2353

As Amended by House Committee on
Education

Brief*

HB 2353 requires the State Board of Education to provide for a community service program to be offered to all accredited high schools in the state.

The bill defines "community service" to mean a service performed by a high school student, without pay, for the purpose of benefitting the student's community. Service performed could include, but it not limited to, mentoring or tutoring elementary school pupils; assisting in a nursing home or adult care center; providing lawn care or performing other tasks for senior citizens or disabled persons; assisting in a homeless shelter or a soup kitchen; organizing or assisting in fund raisers for disaster victims and other needy persons; assisting community-based nonprofit agencies that provide programs and services for low-income people, the disabled, and the elderly; and assisting fraternal organizations in charitable activities.

Background

HB 2353 was proposed by Representative Lisa Benlon who commented on the positive experience of her son in a community service program in Shawnee Mission High School. Representative Benlon expressed her belief that young adults who help in their communities take pride in them and become less inclined to engage in destructive activities.

The Executive Director of the Kansas Office for Community Service, the principal of Dodge City High School (USD 443), the

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org/cgi-bin/fulltext/bills.cgi>

Executive Director of East Central Kansas Economic Opportunity Corporation (ECKAN), and students from Shawnee Mission Northwest High School (USD 512) and Ottawa High School (USD 290) also appeared as proponents of community service programs.

The Kansas Association of School Boards expressed opposition to the notion of state imposition of a new curriculum mandate on public schools at a time when the current proposal is to reduce funding for them.

Committee amendments deleted the requirement that a class in community service be given in all accredited high schools and retained the direction that the State Board of Education provide for a community service program to be offered to the accredited high schools.

The fiscal note on HB 2353, as introduced, reported the State Department of Education said that the cost to administer the requirements of the bill would be negligible. The fiscal note further explained that school districts would pay the costs of offering the community service classes, which, under the amendments, would be voluntary programs rather than mandatory classes.