

Testimony for Consideration by Kansas House Committee
on Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development

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This testimony addresses my own views on House Bill 2326, an act concerning labor relations as it affects public school teachers in Kansas. These are my own views, and the opinions are my own; they may or may not be shared by other members of the board on which I am privileged to serve.

I support House Bill 2326 and its provisions to allow teachers who are not represented by a union in a collective bargaining agreement to negotiate their own salaries with local school boards. I believe in the professionalism of individual teachers to negotiate their own salaries, particularly for secondary school assignments in technical subjects. Since my brief tenure on the Kansas State Board of Education began in January 2013 our Kansas legislature has provided the citizenry with updated laws permitting those with technical expertise to teach certain subjects in the secondary schools of Kansas without necessarily matriculating at a college of education. This is progress.

As education changes ever more rapidly, it is important that professional teachers have professional avenues to negotiate individual salaries. For too long teachers have been treated as clerks, and the salary charts common to most public school districts confirm that bias that ultimately contributes to poorer schools having a more difficult time finding technical expertise, especially in the STEM courses (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). The longstanding bias toward collective bargaining ends up hurting poorer schools the most.

My varied work history and my engineering background permits me to wholeheartedly endorse the provisions of House Bill 2326 that would facilitate more professionals into our public schools.

Thank you.