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February 5, 2016

Chairman Highland and Members of the House Education Committee,

Good afternoon. My Name is Linda Fund. As Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Community Colleges Association of Trustees (KACCT), I am here today to provide testimony in favor of HB 2531. Our teachers are central to everything we do. So rest assured, we believe in creating a great workplace where both teachers and students thrive.

Community colleges are locally governed by locally elected trustees who are responsible to their constituents. For some of our colleges, the amount of state funding is as little as 11% and the amount of local funding as great as 56%. However, local control is today more myth than reality, at least when it comes to matters involving continuing contract.

Community colleges hire faculty and are in the best position to determine how best to balance teacher needs and college/community needs and how to put students first.

Our colleges are very efficient and run very lean in order to provide access to all Kansans to higher education. Because of this, they need flexibility to be responsive to funding cuts, whether they are due to state aid reductions or local property valuation, or enrollment.

With creative local leadership, ending continuing contract as we know it could lead to something much better for teachers — and for their students. The optimal policy would provide due process protections but only to the extent that they are valued by good teachers. Good teachers might feel they need protection from capricious actions by administrators, but have no use for, and thus would not value, a process so onerous that it could only serve to protect the worst of the worst. Continuing contract reform

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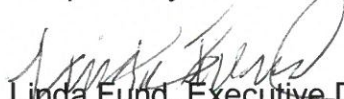
should balance the benefits of using this protection to attract and retain good teachers with the costs it imposes by making it more difficult to eliminate bad teachers.

Higher education economics are increasingly making teachers' continuing contracts obsolete in favor of adjuncts. And although adjuncts are important and do great work with students, why not look to empower teachers and administrators by giving them the ability to negotiate more flexible contracts? And that is exactly what this bill will do.

This bill does not prohibit a continuing contract provision in a local agreement. What it does is allow colleges and teachers to decide what is important and workable through the local negotiation process.

Some colleges may negotiate a provision into their agreement and some may not, but because that decision is being made locally, we think that is a proper result.

Respectfully Submitted,



Linda Fund, Executive Director
Kansas Association of Community College Trustees