

House Pensions and Benefits Committee

Testimony on HB 2253

Delivered by Cheryl L. Semmel, Executive Director
United School Administrators of Kansas

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Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee as a proponent of HB 2253, a bill to extend special employment after retirement provisions under KPERS for educators. USA|Kansas, the Kansas School Superintendents' Association and the Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators have consistently supported the ability of districts to employ individuals who have already retired.

Current law provides an exemption to allow teachers and other licensed professionals who retire with KPERS benefits to return to work without an earnings cap. HB 2253 would extend the sunset date from July 1, 2015 to July 1, 2018.

The current exemption provides districts with one more resource or "tool" to recruit or hire the most qualified individuals to work with students. Often, districts hire retired individuals for one of the following reasons:

- High demand and/or shortage in special education
- Shortage in a particular discipline like math, science or fine arts, or
- Unanticipated staffing needs.

The demand for individuals in shortage or high demand areas may be exacerbated by geography.

Special education districts, cooperatives and interlocals work to secure high quality, experienced professionals to work with our most vulnerable students and those with extraordinary needs. In an area with high attrition and growing demand, many of our special education programs struggle to recruit enough individuals to fill vacancies. In certain areas, districts may have to contract with private companies or hospitals at higher costs.

School districts may also encounter situations whereby a position needs to be filled immediately. In those cases, the most immediate and viable solution may be a retired individual who has the requisite experience and who is readily available.

Administrators recognize there are concerns and questions about the practice of working after retirement. We are committed to working with you to address those issues, while ensuring we have access to high quality professionals to work with our students.

Thank you for your consideration and we ask that you recommend HB 2533 favorably for passage.