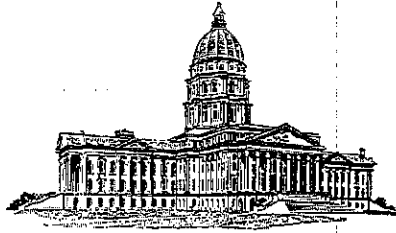


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SHANNON FRANCIS

125TH DISTRICT

February 17, 2016

Testimony in Support of HB 2654 to the House Pension & Benefits Committee

Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 2654.

This bill would allow Health Care Professionals to work after retirement in county hospitals and health departments that are part of the KPERS System .

The need for this bill came to my attention when a recent retiree that works in my district found out that as a result of legislation passed in 2015 she would lose her retirement check from KPERS after her earnings exceeded the income cap.

My Constituent was frustrated that because of the circumstances involved in the passage of the legislation and her retirement planning; there was no way for her to know, when she gave notice of her retirement, that this cap would affect her future employment at my County Hospital.

While I sympathize with this issue, it brought to my mind a larger problem. Rural Kansas already suffers from an inability to attract and retain skilled health care professionals to our communities. Our hospitals often find it necessary to contract with outside companies for temporary health professionals to fill vacancies.

I am concerned that KPERS employees will retire regardless of the income cap. To avoid the income cap retirees will take employment with private employers or county hospitals across state lines. We are creating hiring difficulties for our rural health departments and hospitals without substantially limiting early retirement from KPERS.

I know the members of this Committee have worked diligently to protect the solvency of KPERS. It is a difficult problem. It is also important for our rural health departments and county hospitals to be able to retain and find employees. I hope you will agree with me and support the passage of House Bill 2654.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have