Testimony to Senate Education Committee
SB 176 Limiting negotiations under the Professional Negotiations Act
February 23, 2015
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Chairman Abrams and members of the Committee,

We appreciate this opportunity to present testimony in support of SB 176 to limit negotiations under the Professional Negotiations Act.

In 2012, the Governor's School Efficiency Task Force recommended that that the Legislature "Revise/narrow the Professional Negotiations Act to prevent it from hindering operational flexibility/resource assignment." More recently, the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) encouraged the K-12 Commission on Student Achievement and Efficiency to "…recommend policies that empower local school leaders to make the best decisions for their community - but with accountability for results." Recommendations under that heading included this statement: "...the number of items required for bargaining should be reduced."

After reflecting on testimony submitted to the K-12 Commission and consulting with superintendents and other education groups, the signatories of the Commission's Minority Report recommended the legislative changes reflected in HB 2034 and a companion bill for introduction to the Senate. Mandatory subjects of bargaining would be limited to "salaries and wages, including pay for duties under supplemental contracts, and hours and amounts of work.

Unfortunately, the Senate companion of HB 2034 was not introduced. SB 176 goes farther in providing districts with the ability to make student-focused operating decisions (the only mandatory subject of bargaining would be the minimum amount of salaries and wages), but is much preferable to the compromise reached between KASB and KNEA as reflected in SB 136.

Where HB 2034 and its intended Senate companion only applied to school districts, SB 176 also applies to technical college or the institute of technology at Washburn University and the board of trustees of any community college. We believe this to be appropriate for the reasons we support the changes affecting school districts.

We believe SB 176 provides school districts with much-needed flexibility to make operating decisions in students' best interests and encourage the Committee to recommend it favorably.