



Kaw Valley Chapter Military Officers Association of America Testimony for HB 2228



Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am Major (Retired) Sheli Sweeney, Legislative Liaison of the Kaw Valley Chapter (KVC) of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). The KVC-MOAA actively serves as an advocate for proposed legislation affecting the military career force, the retired community, and veterans of the uniformed services.

Veterans and service members residing in all regions of the State of Kansas comprise nearly 9% of the overall population. Service members include all branches of the military . . . active duty, Kansas Army and Air National Guard (KSNG), reserve organizations (i.e., Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines), retirees and those who have served any length of time in the military. Military personnel (active duty, KSNG, reserve components, veterans and retirees) and all U.S. procurement contracts to Kansas companies created an economic impact of \$7.7 billion. This included \$50 million to city revenues, \$73.5 million to county revenues and \$270.2 million to state tax revenues.

The military is important to Kansas—both our economy and our quality of life. Veterans who have deployed and returned to their hometowns in Kansas live in every county and every community in our state. Reintegration of these veterans into their families and communities is an important policy issue in our state. Employment, healthcare, education, pay and benefits, and family support are challenges that will require us to act to ensure their continued success in the community.

MOAA-KVC supports passage of **HB 2228** to ensure that military members are able to meet their higher education goals at Kansas Institutions of higher education. This is a win-win policy for Kansas. Military members are more likely to get their education here in Kansas if they can pay in state tuition. There is an economic impact to having those students study and earn their degrees at Kansas institutions. The surrounding communities can benefit in the house, services, transportation, supplies and other economic impacts of a student attending our schools here in Kansas. Not only that, but it is the right thing to do for our veterans, service members, Guard and Reserves and families, as outlined in the bill.

AMENDMENT REQUEST: We do have one amendment to suggest. It appears that in New Section 1, only ACTIVE DUTY military members are included for purposes of in-state tuition. This would exclude 72% of the Kansas National Guard who are drill status Guard members. This may be an oversight, so we ask you to please amend the section to read:

An active duty, national guard or reserve member of the armed forces of the United States...

National Guard members are listed in other sections of the bill and they are certainly part of our Armed Forces, holding the unique position of serving both Kansas and the Nation.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself at rhoddlr@aol.com / 785-640-8751 or Major (Ret) Sheli Sweeney, MOAA Legislative Chair at shelisweeney@hotmail.com / 785.213.9053.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR KANSAS MILITARY MEMBERS AND FAMILIES!