



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS

March 10, 2015

Testimony Regarding HB 2228

Chairman Ostmeyer and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 2228.

The Kansas Board of Regents (Board) supports House Bill No. 2228 and the amendment of K.S.A. 2014 Supp. 76-729 as necessary to comply with Section 702 of the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 ("Choice Act"). This new federal law requires that rates equivalent to in-state tuition be given to certain military veterans, their spouses and dependent children.¹ This change must be made to the law by July 2015 to ensure uninterrupted availability of GI benefits and post-911 benefits to veterans seeking admission to Kansas state universities.²

In order to comply with Section 702, Kansas must offer a rate of tuition equivalent to in-state rates to certain veterans,³ and their spouses, ex-spouses and children, without any

¹ The Veteran's Administration has provided a fact sheet that succinctly summarizes the new federal provision at http://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/factsheets/Section_702_Factsheet.pdf.

² K.S.A. 76-729 applies only to the six state universities. Community colleges, technical colleges and Washburn University possess more discretionary authority with regard to setting in-state tuition rates, and thus no change to the residency statutes applicable to these institutions appears necessary.

³ The Choice Act defines eligible veterans as those who have retired or been honorably discharged after at least 90 days of active service and who enroll within three years of that discharge. States may require such veterans, their spouse and dependents to be in the state at the time of taking classes and to declare that they intend to make Kansas their residence.

durational residency requirement. We are told that the Veterans' Administration has reviewed the language of Section 1(a)(2) of the Bill and determined that it is sufficient to meet Section 702 requirements.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of HB 2228. Please let us know if you have any questions.