



## KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

**House Committee on Education  
February 8, 2018**

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President & CEO**

Chairman Aurand and Members of the Committee, this testimony is submitted in support of House Bill 2541.

Last fall, Major General Tafanelli, the Adjutant General for Kansas, requested that the Board of Regents support full funding of the National Guard Educational Assistance Act program for Kansans serving in the National Guard. The Board is supportive of this request and included it in our budget request to the Governor. In FY 2017 the program could support only 54 percent of tuition and fees for members of the Guard for lack of funding.

As the top benefit for recruiting future members of the Guard and retaining top talent in their formations, the program incentivizes service to Kansans and the nation while also encouraging Guard members to attend in-state institutions. The surrounding states have taken action to fund state tuition assistance at 100%. For Kansas to get to the same benefit, \$3.0 million total would be needed from the State General Fund. The Governor's budget would equalize our benefit to surrounding states, and we support this important assistance for our National Guard members.

We understand the National Guard's interest in making these revisions was to streamline the process for the administration of the program and clearly define the benefit. These changes with the additional funding will greatly benefit their recruitment efforts.

An additional note, we recommended and the National Guard concurred, that language should be added in the bill to allow the consideration of satisfaction of the service requirement if there are extenuating circumstances or an extreme hardship situation that a Guard member was enduring. Guard members would be allowed to submit a waiver of the service requirement for consideration to waive the service. We support this change.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our support of this legislation.

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