

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

CONFERENCE SUBMISSION FORM

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26 HOURS PRIOR TO THE SCHEDULED MEETING

Bill # SB 100

Date of testimony February 2, 2017

Print Contact Name (and/or person(s) who will be testifying):

Bonnie K. Sowers, MS, RN

Nursing Education Director

Agency/Organization Represented:

Hesston College Department of Nursing

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Please check type and category applicable:

Oral Testimony (Speaking): _____

Written Only (Not speaking): X

Category: Proponent: X Opponent: _____ Neutral: _____

Please submit your PDF electronic testimony at or near the same time as you submit your 45 hard copies to:

Senate Education Committee Assistant

Amy.Robinson@senate.ks.gov

785-296-7368

Room: 224-E (Office of Senator Baumgardner)

We appreciate your attention to these important details which enables better service for all.

**Proponent Testimony on SB 100
To the Senate Education Committee
January 31, 2017
Bonnie Sowers, MS, RN
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Testimony:

Committee Chair Baumgardner and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide proponent testimony related to SB 100.

I am a nursing education director who graduated from Ohio State University with a Master of Science degree in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing. I am passionate about ensuring the existence of an adequate RN workforce in mental health setting and encouraging nursing students to consider this area of healthcare. Throughout my 40-plus years in nursing education, it has been evident that nursing students need much encouragement to even consider a professional career in psychiatric mental health nursing. Typically, only one or two (if any) out of each graduating class express a desire to work in this area of nursing.

I was delighted to see the introduction of SB 100, opening the existing Kansas Nursing Service Scholarship to include nursing students who are planning to work in mental health facilities. At present, students considering a future career in mental health settings are denied an opportunity to apply for the Kansas Nurse Service Scholarship. SB 100 provides an incentive and support for nursing students to consider a future career in this underserved area of healthcare.

It would mean a great deal to me, to current and future nursing students in the state of Kansas, and to all who are committed to the fight against mental illness to have the Kansas Nursing Service Scholarship opened up to those who have a heart to serve this vulnerable population within our state. Thank you very much for giving this important issue your time and attention.