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**PROPONENT Testimony on SB 473
Concerning KIDS Matching Grant Program
March 16, 2020
Given by: Jake LaTurner, Kansas State Treasurer**

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

The Kansas Investments Developing Scholars (KIDS) Matching Grant Program was created by the Legislature in 2006 as an incentive program for the purpose of encouraging the establishment of postsecondary savings accounts by income-eligible individuals and families.

Currently, a qualified individual or family establishes a Learning Quest account and applies for the matching grant annually. The previous year's tax information is provided to determine income eligibility. Upon approval, the account owner contributes at least \$100 and up to \$600 during the program year and that contribution is matched dollar-for-dollar. Applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis and the program is limited to 1,200 participants each year with not more than 300 from a single Congressional District.

Since its inception in 2007, the program has never had full participation. In fact, the average number of participants over these 13 years is 686. During the past 3 years I have been in office I have dedicated resources to marketing the KIDS program. Although our numbers have increased, we still have over 400 spots available each year that Kansas families are not utilizing.

To summarize SB 473, the bill:

- Facilitates contributions by friends and family members to accounts in the KIDS program and matches those contributions dollar-for-dollar.
- Modifies the definition of "qualified individual or family" to allow up to 300 applications from Kansans currently serving in or honorably discharged veterans of the Kansas national guard or any branch of the United States military.
- Facilitates contributions from charitable organizations to accounts in the KIDS program by depositing those contributions in an account for which the withdrawals are restricted to qualified withdrawals and matching those contributions dollar-for-dollar.

My goal with SB 473 is to remove barriers to Kansas families taking advantage of the KIDS Matching Grant Program. Our greatest challenge is that the very families that can benefit the most from this program in many cases do not have the disposable income to contribute to an account. The changes proposed by SB 473 will serve to increase the number of active participants in the program, increase the amount contributed to accounts, and improve the likelihood of these children participating in future postsecondary education.

I frequently hear from Kansas families how Learning Quest and KIDS Matching Grant accounts have helped change the course of their student's lives and I encourage you to pass SB 473 to provide more Kansas students this important opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jake LaTurner".

Jake LaTurner
Kansas State Treasurer