



Testimony before the

**House Committee on Appropriations**

on

**HB 2626**

by

**Jerry Henn, Assistant Executive Director - USA-Kansas**

Chairman Waymaster and Appropriations committee members,

USA-Kansas submits written testimony in support of HB 2626.

Educators continue to retire from the teaching field leaving gaps in our schools. The number of teacher candidates at universities is also declining. We believe supporting the scholarship program would help our teachers to further their education to better help the students in Kansas.

Thank you for considering this bill. We have a growing number of teacher education programs in our Kansas high schools. We have partnerships in Western Kansas that promote education as a rewarding career, yet we continue to see declining numbers of potential educators in our college classrooms. I'm sure we can identify a number of challenges which might keep students from fulfilling their dreams of becoming an educator, many of them out of our control.

Helping a student finance those dreams is an obstacle we can overcome. Reducing the upfront and out of pocket expenses is something we can control. If done properly, and with continued support, together we can rebuild this valuable resource of professionals.

We understand the promise of loan forgiveness once these individuals receive their degrees, but for too many of these young ambitious students, it's the up front cost of education that halts dreams before they start. Anything we can do in the near future to limit the out of pocket living/moving expenses that continue to burden our potential educators would be helpful. This bill is another great step and together we must continue to find ways to keep our high school graduates pursuing degrees in education.

USA-Kansas would encourage the Appropriations Committee to pass HB 2626 favorably.