

State of Kansas House of Representatives
Chuck Schmidt, 88th District

Hon. Steven Johnson, Chair
Coleen Coker, Committee Assistant
House Insurance and Pensions Committee
Re: HB2593

Submitted by Representative Chuck Schmidt, 88th District

Mr. Chairman and Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of HB2593, a bill that will help with the teacher shortage we are currently experiencing in Kansas Schools. As an educator for 33 years, I asked myself what could be done to help schools with this shortage. It occurred to me that there is a pool of qualified candidates among our retired educators. In my own case, after retiring as an administrator, I was asked to come back and fill a teaching spot which the school could not fill. That was one of the most rewarding decisions I made in my career.

Current law states that a KPERS retiree must pay the statutory amount into KPERS (approximately 13%) if they return to work in a school. When their earnings reach \$25,000 they must then pay 30% of the amount above \$25,000 into KPERS. I believe this is a strong disincentive for anyone to return to teach.

This bill removes the 30% penalty for a period of two years. There is a sunset on the bill so as not to incentivize anyone to retire early to take advantage of the removal of this penalty. The bill retains the 60 day waiting period after retirement before entering into another contract and also requires that there not be a prearranged employment agreement.

This bill applies only to KPERS employees who return to work in schools. There will be some proponent testimony from educational organizations to attest to the shortage we are currently experiencing. I believe by removing this disincentive for retired teachers who already have the qualifications and experience, we can make a difference. By putting a sunset on the bill, this does not provide any incentive for someone to retire early to take advantage.

This bill can help with our educator shortage and not damage the funding balance for KPERS. I recommend that this committee take a positive step for public schools by passing HB2593.

Thank you and I will now stand for questions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rep. Chuck Schmidt, 88th District