

## Faith Lopez Testimony on HB 2265

Good afternoon legislators, my name is Faith Lopez and I am a student at the University of Kansas- and I am also serving as the State Relations Coordinator for the Student Legislative Action Committee. Thank you to the Chair, Representative Smith, and other legislators for allowing a hearing over this important legislation before you today that is relevant to college affordability - the increasingly high cost of textbooks. Based on results from a survey conducted in 2019 by the KBOR Student Advisory Committee over textbook affordability, the majority of students are spending well over \$500 on textbooks each semester. Using that \$500 amount as an average, the state sales tax is 6.5% in Kansas, that equates to roughly \$32 that could better be **used** to put towards groceries, gas, or even housing. For myself, moving from Leavenworth to Lawrence was an already overwhelming experience entering my freshman year in a pandemic. I am a full time student, taking 18 credit hours, while also working a part-time job, and the total cost of going to KU still makes my stomach churn. Financial aid does help me and many other students afford to attend college, but when looking to the KBOR survey I mentioned earlier, over  $\frac{2}{3}$  of KBOR students indicated that they do not use financial aid to cover the cost of textbooks. However, the educational environment provided by KU is astounding and I know that this experience in higher education will be a transformative opportunity for me and thousands of my fellow students in college- that is why the issue of affordability is so important because students are endeavoring to better themselves through education & the cost of it all can often be too much. I will continue my education while advocating that now, and in the future, college is made more affordable for those seeking a higher education in the State of Kansas. Passing HB 2265 is a step in the right direction on behalf of college students in Kansas.

Every dollar you save students is a dollar that goes to their bills, to their cost of living, and helps ensure you are saving student-taxpayers money. The money students would save from passing HB 2265, they would end up putting right back into the local economy. Thousands of Kansans, out-of-state, and international students pursue their education in the state of Kansas. They live and spend their money in our communities- and in turn our cities and counties benefit from the increased sales tax revenue from students living in their community. Legislators should recognize the economic contributions of college students to the state, and help lift some of the tax burden placed on them - specifically by removing the sales taxes on textbooks.

This problem is so significant that our student governments from around the state have drafted a resolution to pass through our student senates supporting HB 2265. KU Medical School Senate, KU Student Senate, WSU Student Senate, Washburn Student Senate, and Pitt State University have successfully passed this resolution, and other universities will be voting on it soon. From discussions with their leadership, it was certainly clear that there was widespread support for HB 2265 among college students from across the state. Thank you legislators for

your public service and for being advocates for college affordability, please reach out if you have any questions or would like to talk further about this issue.