



January 27, 2021

To: Senate Commerce Committee

From: Vicki Whitaker, KAOM Executive Director

Subj: **Written Virtual Neutral Testimony on SB 10: AN ACT concerning labor and employment; relating to occupational licensing and regulation; enacting the right to earn a living act.**

Chair Olson, Vice Chair Steffen and members of the Committee:

The Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine (KAOM), founded in 1913, represents osteopathic physicians and the osteopathic profession in Kansas. KAOM thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide written, virtual, neutral testimony on Senate Bill 10. This legislation seeks to provide upward mobility through the lessening of occupational regulations that might present arbitrary or excessive red tape.

KAOM cannot comment on the other categories of licensure, registration or certification for the extensive list of entities covered by occupational licensure. The association's comments are strictly related to those licensed to practice medicine and surgery in the state of Kansas and specifically, osteopathic physicians. The practice of medicine is not an "occupation" – it is a profession requiring many years of academic study, followed by years of residency and training.

An **osteopathic physician's license** to practice medicine and surgery in Kansas **is a privilege** earned by the physician. Upon receiving a license, the physician has demonstrated he or she has met the requirements, does not have any "clouds" on their ability to practice medicine and surgery, and has been *thoroughly vetted* by the Kansas State Board of Healing Arts (KSBHA). Because of the necessity of guarding public safety, the process undertaken by the KSBHA is not meant to be easy or quick. *It is meant to be thorough and establish the licensee has earned the privilege to practice medicine in Kansas.*

KAOM believes Senate Bill 10 should exempt the KSBHA from this legislation as all licensees and registrants under its jurisdiction must be held to the highest standard of public health, safety and welfare. Requiring the Kansas Board of Healing Arts to undertake a comprehensive review of all occupational rules and regulations and occupational licenses within its jurisdiction will only further endanger public health and safety by taking the focus from ensuring those caring for our citizens are safe to practice.

The overall intent of Senate Bill 10 is a good one when it aids those individuals whose occupational licensure serves no public health, safety or welfare interests. Bureaucratic red tape should not stand in the way of someone earning an honest living. **However, for the practice of medicine and surgery – high standards in licensing are necessary as Kansas citizens deserve nothing less.**

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony. I can be reached at vicki@kansasdo.org.