



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES
of Kansas

Affiliated with:
American Council of Engineering Companies
Kansas Society of Professional Engineers
National Society of Professional Engineers
Professional Engineers in Private Practice

TESTIMONY

TO: HOUSE COMMERCE COMMITTEE

**FROM: SCOTT HEIDNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING
COMPANIES OF KS**

RE: HB 2414

DATE: MARCH 1, 2023

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today on behalf of the American Council of Engineering Companies of KS (ACEC KS). ACEC KS is the trade organization representing private consulting engineering businesses in Kansas.

We oppose the passage of HB 2414 in its current form. The largest challenge to our member firms today is locating, hiring, and retaining licensed professional engineers. The University Engineering Initiative Act (UEIA) is one of the most important and productive tools in place to ensure this needed pipeline of talent continues moving forward. Changes to the UEIA should not be made lightly and without a thorough consideration of how those changes will impact the ultimate goal of producing more engineering graduates.



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HB 2414 would add a category of schools to those eligible for UEIA funding. This isn't necessarily a bad thing in and of itself. However, it appears the bill leaves many grey areas in terms of implementation as well as a diluting of impact of the investment in UEIA.

HB 2414 opens the possibility of adding more schools, but does not add any additional funds. This means the engineering colleges at KU, KSU, and WSU would receive *less* funding. Given the proven success of UEIA at these schools, that is a point of great concern.

HB 2414 does not appear to expand the current expectations for graduate numbers to "new" schools who would become eligible for UEIA. The accountability metrics in the current UEIA program have served the state well in ensuring the public policy goals the Kansas Legislature for the program are met. They would not apply to schools joining the program moving forward. These expectations should be consistent.

Finally, there will be added cost and complexity if non-Regents schools are added to the program. The current program is run in tandem by the Board of Regents and the Department of Commerce. This partnership has worked extremely well, but a new layer of oversight would have to be created for non-Regents schools joining the UEIA program.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments and concerns.