Written Testimony in Support of HB 2698
For the House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee
February 13, 2024

Chuck Knapp
President and CEO, Jobs for America's Graduates-Kansas

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Chairman Owens and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chuck Knapp, and I am President and CEO of Jobs for America's Graduates-Kansas (JAG-K). Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 2698.

JAG-K wants all students to have successful futures. We partner with students to help them identify career paths compatible with their skills and passions and overcome challenges that put them at risk of not attaining educational and career success. Most of our students are in public school classrooms across the state. We have 106 evidence-based, in-school programs in 74 schools. We also have programs in the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex (KJCC) in Topeka.

Although we can help our KJCC students learn many of the same competencies as students in our traditional programs, there are limitations on the work-based learning experiences and other educational opportunities available within the facility. The leadership at KJCC has established partnerships with Washburn Tech and other organizations to allow students to receive training within the walls of the facility, but we believe allowing some students to earn experiences outside of KJCC could be highly beneficial to the students, businesses, and the community.

There would clearly need to be protocols and processes in place to ensure safety and security, but the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) has years of experience doing similar activities with adults. We would gladly work with KDOC and KJCC leaders to help establish guidelines, procedures, and opportunities for the residents in our program.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer our reasons for supporting HB 2698. JAG-K wants all students to have successful futures, and we believe this legislation may help with that goal.