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Oral Testimony – Opponent
House Education Committee
Senate Bill 66
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Chair Thomas, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to SB 66.

KNEA membership supports reciprocity of licensure/certification for educators coming to Kansas from other states, so long as the initial licensing/certification standards meet those set for all Kansas educators.

We greatly appreciate the thought and work that has gone into crafting this legislation. However, KNEA opposes SB 66.

In short, KNEA opposes SB 66 simply because membership in such a compact does not guarantee that initial licensing/certification standards of partner states in the compact meet those set for all Kansas educators.

Additionally, we oppose SB 66 on the following grounds as well:

- Fairness.
- Impact on the Learning Environment for Students.
- Kansas Department of Education Deliberations

Fairness

As a member of such a compact, the possibility exists for a wide discrepancy between the standards by which teachers are licensed/certified from one state to another. The existence of unequal standards would most certainly pit colleagues against each other causing morale issues. The mere knowledge that an out of state teacher with far less education and/or licensure standards can immediately move in state and begin teaching could be seen as another example of degrading the profession.

This bill does allow member states to require incoming teachers to eventually complete specific state requirements, but it does not mandate it nor is there a guarantee that such practice will come to be.

Impact on the Learning Environment for Students

KNEA's vision is a great public school for every student. This vision is predicated insistence of the existence of a qualified teacher in every classroom. Teacher licensing and certification provide the bedrock for this standard.

Post-secondary teaching programs are rigorous and everchanging to keep up with the everchanging needs of our student population. High quality teachers possess expertise beyond subject matter knowledge. Some examples include:

- Learning Theory
- Teaching Culturally Diverse Populations
- Classroom Management
- Teaching Students with Special Needs
- Student Safety and Risk Management Strategies

Kansans deserve the assurance that teachers possess all these skills and more.

The potential of placing individuals in the classroom without rigorous training and background knowledge opens schools, districts, and most importantly students to potential risk, complications, and other consequences. SB 66 has the potential to set up such environments.

Kansas Department of Education Deliberations

Article 6 of the Kansas Constitution provides that the Kansas State Board of Education has general supervision of public schools, educational institutions and all the educational interests of the state.

The Kansas State Board of Education took part in extensive discussions regarding similar compacts that are laid out in SB 66. The members of the board could not reach consensus on this issue in the January meeting. The lack of consensus and basic discontent with this issue at this time is one more reason for KNEA to oppose SB 66.

Thank you for your time.