



To: Representative Sean Tarwater, Chair and Members, House Commerce Committee

From: Kylee Childs, Director of Government Affairs, LeadingAge Kansas

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LeadingAge Kansas is the state association for not-for-profit and mission-focused aging services. We have 150 member organizations across Kansas, which include not-for-profit nursing homes, retirement communities, hospital long-term care units, assisted living, home plus, senior housing, low-income housing, home health agencies, home and community-based service programs, PACE and Meals on Wheels. Our members serve more than 25,000 older Kansans each day and employ more than 20,000 people across the state.

Proponent Testimony on HB2339 – Enhancing the Adult Care Homes Workforce

I am here to speak in favor of House Bill 2339, which provides critical support for adult care home providers, nursing workforce recruitment, and the state's broader childcare needs.

This bill is an innovative approach to the workforce crisis facing adult care homes in Kansas. By offering scholarships to part-time nursing students, addressing educational standards for nursing instructors, and increasing childcare availability in the state, it ensures that adult care homes have access to highly qualified staff, addressing both the immediate shortage of nursing professionals and the long-term sustainability of care services for the growing elderly population in Kansas.

Intergenerational Childcare Fund

Adult care homes are well-positioned to support not only the elderly but also the state's broader childcare needs. Establishing the Intergenerational Child Care Fund will enable adult care homes to offer childcare services, creating a mutually beneficial environment where both children and older adults can thrive. This initiative supports both the recruitment and retention of nursing staff—by alleviating childcare challenges for employees—and helps expand childcare slots across the state.

Furthermore, the Intergenerational Child Care Fund's grants for adult care homes to offer childcare services will foster intergenerational programming. Studies consistently show that such programs improve the health outcomes of both children and older adults, making this bill a win-win for Kansas families and communities. Not only does it address a critical shortage of childcare slots, but it also promotes the well-being of Kansas residents across all ages.

Two amendments that need addressed are on page 2, lines 1-4:

- (1) Assist ~~newly~~ licensed adult care homes in covering start-up costs associated with establishing child care services; and
- (2) support programming and operational costs for ~~existing~~ adult care homes offering *existing* child care services.

Modifying the Nurse Practice Act for Faculty Requirements

The Kansas Board of Nursing currently maintains that all nursing educators for a Registered Nursing program must possess a master's degree to teach, regardless of whether it is an associate's degree at a community college or a bachelor's degree. While we respect their commitment to high educational standards, a master's degree does not automatically equate to an ability to effectively teach. Nurses with master's degrees can often earn significantly higher salaries working directly in the field, making recruitment of more faculty in nursing programs extremely difficult. In restricting nursing faculty to master's degrees, we are bottlenecking our nursing workforce pipeline without necessarily improving or upholding the quality of nursing education.

Master's Degree Faculty Not Required by Kansas Law or Kansas Board of Regents

The Board of Nursing may reference the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) faculty requirements, which typically mandate a master's degree for faculty in registered nursing programs at community colleges. However, Kansas law only requires programs to be approved by the Kansas Board of Nursing, not necessarily accredited. ACEN also occasionally grants exemptions to its faculty requirements depending on the individual college.

Master's degree faculty are also not required by the Kansas Board of Regents.

For coordinated institutions accredited through the Kansas Board of Regents, 88-26-2(b)(2)(A) states:

Each faculty member shall possess an academic degree that is relevant to what the individual is teaching and that is at least one level above the level at which the individual is teaching. Alternatively, for each faculty member employed based on equivalent experience, the institution shall establish criteria for minimum equivalent experience that will be used in the appointment process.

For private postsecondary minimum requirement rules and regulations, 88-28-2(a)(17) states:

Each faculty member's minimum academic credential shall be at least one degree-level above the degree being taught, unless other credentials are typically used in lieu of the academic degree in a particular field of study. In those cases, qualifications may be measured by technical certifications, relevant professional experience, professional certifications, creative activity, training, or licensure, or any combination of these. The institution shall provide documentation that all faculty appointments meet these standards.

It is important to note that this bill would allow nursing programs to employ bachelor's degree faculty in associate's degree nursing programs – but it does not require them to do so. Colleges will remain free to restrict themselves to master's degree faculty and continue their current recruitment efforts unchanged.

States That Have Acted

Five states—Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Missouri—already utilize similar faculty educational requirements, only requiring instructors to hold one degree above what is being taught. This bill aligns Kansas with these best practices, helping attract skilled educators while maintaining high standards for nursing education.

We strongly advocate for aligning the nurse faculty regulations with the Kansas Board of Regents' policy, which requires faculty to hold one degree higher than the level they are teaching. This adjustment would open up opportunities for more qualified individuals to enter the teaching profession and help

address part of the growing workforce pipeline issues in Kansas. It is essential that we create pathways for more educators, allowing colleges to expand their nursing programs and ultimately increase the number of nurses available in our state.

Modifying the Nursing Service Scholarship Act for Part-time Students

The proposed modification to the Nursing Service Scholarship Act, as outlined in HB 2339, would provide part-time nursing students with the ability to access scholarships at a prorated rate. This change is critical as it allows students to balance their employment and education more effectively, encouraging them to remain in the workforce while pursuing their degrees. By supporting part-time students, we increase access to nursing education, helping address Kansas' nursing shortage and strengthening the healthcare workforce.

We kindly request you support this forward-thinking legislation, which strengthens our adult care home workforce, addresses childcare needs, and enhances the health and well-being of both our elderly and our children.

Thank you for your consideration.