



KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

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Oral Testimony – Opponent
Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Insurance
Senate Bill 282
March 13, 2025

Chairperson Dietrich and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit oppositional testimony on SB 282.

Kansas NEA would like to highlight the written testimony submitted by the Keeping the Kansas Promise coalition. As an active member of this coalition, we support the testimony, which outlines several concerns about this bill.

Kansas NEA is a member-driven organization that represents all 40,000 educators in the state of Kansas. We have nearly 22,000 members. The positions we advocate for have been proposed, debated, and adopted by several hundred members that were selected by their peers to attend our annual Representative Assembly.

KNEA has a robust set of resolutions and policy positions regarding KPERS. Our resolutions state, in part:

KNEA further believes this may be accomplished through either a traditional defined benefit plan design or a hybrid defined benefit/defined contribution design, so long as the plan design also encompasses the following:

- *Automatic annual cost of living adjustment equal to the increase in Consumer Price Index For All Urban Consumers with maximum of 4 percent*
- *Multiplier of at least 2.0 percent*
- *Fully funded plan*
- *Full vesting after 5 years*
- *Full benefits when years of service and age of employee equal 85 or if vested at age 62*
- *Improve benefits of participants in Kansas State Retirement System*
- *Permission for local boards of education to pay and/or supplement employee contribution;*
- *A Medicare supplement plan for retirees that is deducted from the KPERS retirement check as pre-tax dollars*
- *A minimum combined disability payment from KPERS and Social Security of at least 80 percent of gross salary*
- *Elimination of reductions under options A, B, and C when the joint annuitant is a primary designee;*
- *Allow for the purchase of out-of-state teaching, military service, or approved alternative service; and*
- *A death benefit for retirees which would cover funeral expenses.*

For this hearing on SB 282, KNEA specifically opposes the proposed conversion of a traditional defined benefit program for Kansas public servants into a defined contribution program—the ultimate outcome of SB 282. We believe this shift is problematic and urge consideration of its implications.

Kansas is facing a teacher shortage due to challenges in recruiting and retaining educational professionals. KNEA does not believe that significantly altering the traditional structure of KPERS will help address these challenges.

Employers often promote the idea of a defined contribution plan as one that provides employees with more flexibility and control. While this may be true in some cases, many private-sector employers prefer offering defined contribution plans because they save money by shifting the investment risk to employees. This approach is understandable—and perhaps appropriate—in the private sector, where employers can often offer higher wages and where the primary goal of the organization is to generate profit.

However, shifting investment risk to public servants is neither ideal nor fair. Defined benefit plans, such as KPERS Tier 1 and KPERS Tier 2, provide greater security, predictability, and protection from market volatility. Fairness demands that we recognize the invaluable contributions of educators. Teaching is a unique, critical, and noble profession. Educators serve the public, often accepting lower salaries while facing increasing demands, stagnating wages, and growing classroom challenges. Many teachers even spend their own money to supply their classrooms. Amidst these difficulties, ensuring educators secure retirement is simply the right thing to do.

Kansas NEA respectfully asks the committee to oppose SB 282.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.