



Testimony to the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Senate Bill 214  
Dr. JuliAnn Mazachek, President  
Washburn University  
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Chair Billinger Vice Chair Claeys, Ranking Member Pettey and members of the committee, I am JuliAnn Mazachek, President of Washburn University. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today in support of Senate Bill 214.

Washburn University School of Law (“Washburn Law”) is a public law school and has proudly graduated many notable alumni since its founding in 1903 as part of Washburn University. In 2023, the law school relocated to Robert J. Dole Hall. We are dedicated to a curriculum that offers classroom instruction with real-world skills and experience with a majority (60%) of our students coming from all parts of Kansas.

Washburn Law offers a comprehensive rural law program. A summary of this program is attached. There is a crucial need for attorneys in rural areas, both in Kansas and throughout the country. Washburn Law is committed to preparing practice-ready attorneys who can return to rural underserved areas with the skills needed to practice law. Our strong ties to Kansas' rural communities provide students with unparalleled opportunities for a future career while benefitting our state.

The loan program contemplated in Senate Bill 214 will enhance our already robust efforts to place more law students in rural areas and should incentivize and encourage more law graduates to choose to practice law in rural areas by providing financial assistance to attorneys practicing law in rural areas.

I am pleased to answer your questions at the appropriate time. Thank you for allowing my testimony.



## Rural Law overview

- Washburn Law is committed to serving the entire state of Kansas and has implemented initiatives and formed partnerships to ensure high quality placements for its students and to serve rural Kansas.
  - We offer **scholarships** and **grants** to students potentially interested in that area of practice.
  - There are **student organizations** to foster networking and **speakers** who specialize in rural law.
    - Ag Law and Rural Practice student organizations have seen a marked increase in participation in recent years.
  - Through recent **partnerships**, we are able to place up to 40 students each year in rural communities throughout Kansas as facilitated by the programs outlined below.
- The **curriculum** at Washburn Law is designed to provide a robust legal education tailored to the needs of rural practitioners to ensure graduates are ready to address the legal challenges unique to rural America, from property disputes to agricultural regulations.
  - In addition to a comprehensive legal foundation, the curriculum emphasizes practical skills and real-world applications through **externships** and **clinics** that allow students to work directly with rural communities.
  - Students can complete their final year of law school in rural communities by participating in our Third Year Anywhere program.
- Washburn law has **3+3 agreements** with several Kansas schools to get them back to rural communities sooner.
  - Students complete three years of undergrad, then first year of law school counts as final year of undergrad so students graduate after six years with both a bachelors and a law degree, saving one full year of tuition.
  - Current agreements with Washburn, Pittsburg State, Ft. Hays State, Emporia State, Baker University
    - Finalizing agreements with Wichita State and Kansas State.
- Approximately **10-15% of our graduates** each year move into a rural practice

### **Hansen Externship Program**

- Partnership began in 2017 with a grant from the Hansen Foundation
  - Serves the 26-county Hansen catchment area in NW Kansas, north of I-70 and west of highway 81 to state lines.
- Summer externships
  - Up to 20 students each year enroll in six credit hours of externship credit paid for by the grant and receive a stipend for living expenses
- Third Year Anywhere
  - Program expanded in 2019 to allow students to spend their final year of law school in a rural community, receiving a stipend each semester.
- Results to date:
  - Placed 86 students in communities throughout NW Kansas since 2017
  - 18 students have returned to NW Kansas upon graduation to practice law
  - Overall, 36% of those participating in the program are now practicing in a rural area of Kansas.

### **Rural Legal Practice Network and Externship Program**

- Patterson Family Foundation funded program began in 2024 and consists of two elements:
  - Externship Program
    - Up to 20 students each year receive funds for up to six-credit hours of externship credit and a stipend for living and other expenses
    - May be used as part of Third Year Anywhere
    - Supplements the Hansen Program to extend to the entire state of Kansas so up to 40 students may participate in externships with either the Hansen or Patterson programs.
  - Rural Legal Practice Network
    - Create a comprehensive network of rural practitioners that provides access to legal resources and the opportunity to connect, learn, and mentor.
      - Develop electronic list serve connecting rural attorneys
      - Annual Rural Law CLE events
    - Fund staff position to better serve the program (Assistant Director, Rural Programs)
- This program will also create a pipeline to high schools and even middle schools, introducing prospective students to the practice of law and outlining a clear path to return to rural Kansas as an attorney.