

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:40 p.m. on January 29, 2008, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Barbara Allen
Anthony Hensley

Committee staff present: Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Carol Toland, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office
Matt Todd, Revisor of Statutes Office
Shirley Higgins, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Captain Adam Johnson, Kansas Army National Guard
Captain Jason Nelson, Pittsburg State University Army ROTC
Representative Mario Goico
Sheila Frahm, Kansas Association of Community College Trustees (KACCT)

Introduction of bill

Senator Steineger requested the introduction of a conceptual bill which he referred to as “the early childhood deregulation and local control act.” He explained that the bill related to state statutes and regulations which he believes tie the hands of local schools on early childhood spending issues.

Senator Steineger moved to introduce the proposed bill, seconded by Senator Lee. The motion carried.

SB 437 – ROTC service scholarship; community colleges

Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office, noted that **SB 437** amends a provision in the ROTC service scholarship law. Currently, students who qualify for the ROTC service scholarship are students enrolled state educational institutions and Washburn University. The amendment expands the definition of a ROTC institution to include community colleges. Ms. Kiernan also distributed copies of a proposed conforming amendment. (Attachment 1)

Captain Adam Johnson, Education Services Officer, Kansas Army National Guard, testified in support of **SB 437**. He explained the bill would enhance the Kansas National Guard’s officer recruiting base, and it would help address the need to replace field grade officers who will reach their mandatory retirement date over the next five to ten years. He noted that Kansas has not met the standards determined by the National Guard Bureau (NGB) for a number of years, and the Kansas National Guard would like to improve upon the status quo by recruiting future Army officers from Kansas community colleges. He called attention to the data on three graphs attached to his written testimony regarding the total Kansas officer strength vs. the standards determined by NGB. (Attachment 2)

Captain Jason Nelson, Assistant Professor of Military Science, Pittsburg State University (PSU) Army ROTC, continued with testimony in support of **SB 437**, referring to page two of the written testimony he and Captain Johnson jointly prepared. He explained that he began teaching a military science class at Fort Scott Community College (FSCC) in the 2007 fall semester. As PSU staff began talking to the FSCC students about continuing in ROTC and becoming Army officers, it was discovered that many of them would benefit from the Kansas Board of Regents ROTC service scholarship. He noted that the intent of the bill was not to “steal” students from any community college but simply to provide an opportunity for students who complete two years at a community college prior to transferring to a Regents university.

Senator Schodorf read the following paragraph from written testimony on **SB 437** submitted by Diane Lindeman, Director of Student Financial Assistance, Kansas Board of Regents: “The current ROTC Scholarship program has \$186,401 appropriated for scholarships. So far, during Fiscal Year 2008, 19 students have been awarded for a total of \$108,440. In a recent survey of community colleges it was

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estimated that 110 interested students may potentially be added to this scholarship program if community colleges students were included. The average scholarship award during Fiscal Year 2008 has been \$4,500. If the majority of returning students were to be awarded, in addition to new students, it is estimated that \$495,000 would be needed to fully award students through this program for Fiscal Year 2009.” (Attachment 3)

Representative Mario Goico testified in support of **SB 437**. He emphasized that expanding ROTC service scholarships throughout the state would give more incentive for junior ROTC members to continue onward to postsceondary educational institutions. (Attachment 4) Representative Goico went on to remind the Committee that he introduced a bill in the 2007 legislative session which would have provided an incentive for high school students to go on to college and become officers. Senator Schodorf noted that the bill, which passed the House, would allow veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan free tuition when they returned home. The bill was heard by a Senate committee, but no action was taken due to concern about the cost. However, a proviso in the budget allowed \$250,000 for tuition for returning soldiers.

Sheila Frahm, Executive Director, Kansas Association of Community College Trustees (KACCT), informed the Committee that PSU and FSCC have a memorandum of agreement allowing Fort Scott’s students to participate with the PSU ROTC program and access their scholarships, and this agreement gives FSCC students access to a federal program. She said that there is every indication that this long-standing agreement has been very successful. She noted that none of the other 18 Kansas community colleges have this ROTC agreement. When community college leaders were asked how many students would be interested in a ROTC program, they responded that perhaps a total of 80 to 100 students could be interested. In conclusion, Ms. Frahm stated that KACCT looked forward to working with the Legislature on the program when there are further details available regarding the actual program options, methods of classroom and military exercise training, and the locations for such programs. (Attachment 5)

There being no others wishing to testify, the hearing on **SB 437** was closed.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 30, 2008.