

Dr. Shannon Ralph  
sralph81@gmail.com  
Written Proponent Testimony for HB 2081  
Hearing Date: 2/15/23

Members of the House K-12 Education Committee,

My name is Shannon Ralph and I am the 2015 Kansas Teacher of the Year. I am writing to express my support of HB 2081.

The quality of education Kansas students receive hinges on many variables, the most significant being the caliber of the classroom teacher. Students need knowledgeable teachers with a deep understanding of pedagogy. In addition, teachers must be able to navigate the additional workload often required of them, such as fair grading practices, documentation of their work, and ongoing professional development. This is to say nothing of coaching duties for some, supporting clubs and activities, effectively communicating with parents, and supporting struggling students. Most importantly, we need people who love kids.

I can not overemphasize the value of a strong classroom teacher. Kansas is losing quality people, including those who might become great educators, as they struggle to carry the financial burden of an undergraduate education. Anything we can do to lighten the financial load for these students, could ultimately impact the number of people who are trained to step into our children's classrooms.

HB 2081 is designed to support undergraduate students who show great potential for becoming an effective educator. A scholarship can go a long way to lighten the financial load in such a way that a student will finish their undergraduate degree in education, and then move into a classroom. If a KTOY team, or professionals at KSDE identify such a student, it is more likely the student will not only continue the path to become a professional educator, but also become a teacher leader.

I am a proponent of supporting strong educators, or future educators, in meaningful and tangible ways. As a state, and more specifically, as a body of Legislators, I ask that you consider voting yes on this bill as a way to say, "Education is important, and we believe in you".

Sincerely,  
Shannon Ralph, Ph.D.  
2008 Kansas Master Teacher  
2014 Wolfe Teaching Excellence Award, University of Kansas  
2015 Kansas Teacher of the Year  
2016 Lowell Milken Fellow  
2020 Friends of Education ABC Award Recipient