



# COWLEY COLLEGE

Date: February 13, 2024  
To: Chairman Thomas and Members of the House Education Committee  
From: Jessica Lucas, Cowley College Government Affairs Liaison  
Re: Support of HB 2539

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in favor of HB 2539, legislation that will further enhance the successful Kansas Promise Scholarship Act. Cowley College supported this bill in its original iteration and believes the adjustment to account for changes to residency and allowing for 5-hour certifications is important policy.

The Promise Act has been an incredible program and we appreciate its adoption by the legislature. We're here today to speak about some limitations and appreciate that this bill seeks to address those.

Regarding the addition of language to allow 5-hour certifications, that stems from the fact that CNA training is a 5-hour course. But the Promise Act requires 6-hours for eligibility so schools have added an additional class so students can qualify. It's unnecessary and we think this allowance is an appropriate fix.

We also appreciate your support of the language removing the language that makes the scholarship open only to Kansans who have lived in the state for three years. We have students who live in Kansas but have recently moved here that we have to deny the opportunity. Further, as a border college, we also know there's interest from those across the state line.

As the state strives to meet workforce needs and bring more bodies into Kansas, offering this scholarship to out-of-state students only makes sense. It's a low cost way to bring students here and requires two-years of work in Kansas or we get the money refunded. During that two years, we know many will stay as they establish roots in their communities and jobs. We can spend millions of dollars trying to market our state to out-of-state individuals and companies can spend thousands on hiring benefits to relocate them to Kansas ... and we'll probably still have to do both of those things. But for minimal state resources, simply the addition of last-dollar scholarship money, we can enable our community colleges to recruit out-of-state students under the Promise Act, train them in Kansas, then see them in the state for a minimum of two years as part of the Scholarship agreement.

Our college, and our peer institutions across the state, are all working on training and educating a skilled workforce who will hopefully find employment with a Kansas-based company. This bill aids in those efforts to meet our teacher shortage and with the extension to out-of-state students, can help us meet the workforce crisis more rapidly.