



# Goodwill Industries of Kansas, Inc.

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## House Committee on Education Hearing on SB 199 “AO-K to Work” bill Comments by Christopher Stanyer March 20, 2019

Goodwill Industries of Kansas stands in strong support of Senate Bill 199, the AO-K to Work bill.

GED students are adults who often have jobs, families, transportation difficulties, and other important commitments. Our current AO-K system allows students to take GED classes and college classes simultaneously. This requires 6-7 hours of classes per day and is not practical for most adults. The other option is to take GED classes first, which can take a year or more of juggling the commitments listed above, before beginning the college classes required for a certification needed for an in-demand career. Students often become discouraged and return to minimum wage jobs.

Based on 2017 projected US Census data, Kansas has over 179,000 individuals over the age of 25 (only data available) with no high school diploma. Of these individuals, 170,436 (95%) are designated by the US Census as living in poverty.

SB 199 creates a legislative pathway that more efficiently utilizes an existing state program and cost structure to increase the quantity of qualified workforce available to Kansas employers in a shorter period of training time. SB-199 awards high school equivalency through established career-pathways approved and controlled by the Kansas Board of Regents while greatly reducing the time commitment required of qualifying students.

The economic impact also includes the reduction of dependency on public assistance, growing the economy by spending earnings on goods and services, and breaking the cycle of poverty for a younger generation.

- GED testing completion is not required in this program to receive a high school equivalency:
  - Student(s) must be over 21 years old
  - Student(s) will be tested using a KBOR approved academic assessment upon entering the KBOR approved adult education program to qualify for college classes. This is a KBOR mandated assessment for all adult education students. It tests Reading and Mathematics to establish a working skill level.
  - Student(s) must then complete the approved college pathway, with full academic and barrier resolution support from the adult education program, and earn an industry-recognized credential from a KBOR-approved academic institution.
  - Student(s) will then be given a KBOR-approved work skills assessment to demonstrate their preparedness for employment.
  - Having completed the above, and/or any additional requirements deemed necessary by KBOR, the student(s) will be awarded a high school equivalency by the KS Board of Regents.

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