



COWLEY COLLEGE

Date: March 5, 2020
To: Chairwoman Baumgardner and Members of the Senate Education Committee
From: Jessica Lucas, Cowley College Government Affairs Liaison
Re: Support of HB 2515

The Kansas Promise Scholarship Act is a tool to aid the lower-middle-class families that community colleges want to serve but for whom the cost can often be a barrier to access education, the most reliable means to increase an individual's lifetime earning power.

We urge the advancement of the Kansas Promise Scholarship Act after amending eligible program areas. Kansas is a varied state, and our regions depend on different talent sectors to meet the needs of area businesses. To keep Kansas growing in our region, it's crucial this program supports our students in careers that are in high demand for the south-central area. We support the inclusion of language presented by the KACCT:

Suggested Page 2, Lines 29-31 amendment would read: (4) annually collaborate with the department of commerce and Kansas business and industry to identify ~~up to 10~~ **5 statewide job fields and pathways that currently have the highest need for skilled employees and up to 5 job fields and pathways not included in the statewide needs list but which exist within each individual Kansas Department of Commerce region to meet the diverse needs employers in each region;**

We are also seeking clarification of the bill's intent regarding working in Kansas or working AND living in Kansas. If living in Kansas, not just working, is desired, the language offered by KACCT would be necessary.

Cowley College is excited about the opportunities the Kansas Promise Scholarship Act presents for prospective students in our service area. Throughout its 98-year history, Cowley College has always been a "can-do" institution. We're proud of our work to match our area's workforce needs with skilled employees we're training at Cowley College and appreciate the recognition by the bill's sponsors that additional financial tools would aid our efforts. Our college, and our peer institutions across the state, are all working on training and educating a skilled workforce who will hopefully find their employment with a Kansas-based company. Yet, there is a cost involved to achieve advanced credentials and education. Our region has many families who make too much to qualify their children for Federal Pell Grant support, but these families don't make enough to afford the costs associated with higher education. This bill would give students the resources needed to bridge the affordability gap.