



Comments Regarding the State of Kansas Pay Plan
Presented to the State Employee Compensation
Oversight Commission
October 15, 2007

Good morning. On behalf of the membership and board of the State Employees Association of Kansas, thank you for this additional opportunity to speak before the commission about the proposed pay plan.

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate the commission for taking on the task of developing a solution to a very-much out of date salary system. Over the course of your deliberations, you have listened to the concerns of all interested parties and have crafted an ingenious proposal that should well serve the needs of the State of Kansas, if properly funded, for years to come. While SEAK is generally supportive of the commission's proposal, we have some suggestions that we feel would improve the proposal.

My comments today will be brief and will focus on the following:

- o Phased funding
- o The need for another pay plan category
- o The need to provide incentives for the Basic Vocational Pay Plan.
- o Staff training and consistency in implementation and pay plan maintenance.

Our first concern with the proposed pay plan is that it is to be implemented in a phased approach. While we can understand the need to implement the technical aspects of the plan due to the work involved in implementation, we cannot understand why state employees must wait to have their salaries simply brought up to an already-identified market rate. I would urge this commission, when submitting their findings to the administration and the legislature, to recommend bringing state salaries up to the market level with all due haste, not a phased implementation over several years..

Our next concern is what we believe to be a glaring inadequacy with the proposal. For many years, the State of Kansas has faced excessive turnover with the category of jobs associated with maintenance and repair trades. Jobs included within this group include carpenters, plumbers, electricians, HVAC technicians, and telephone/network technicians. People with these skill-sets are highly-marketable and can often receive higher salary and benefits in the private sector. This leads to the State of Kansas being a training ground, often at very high costs, for the private

sector. Due to the state's inability to retain staff in these positions, we encourage you to consider a sixth category within the salary proposal to specifically deal with these jobs. We feel that this new category should have salaries closely aligned with the market like the basic vocational pay plan, but with incentives for the achievement of enhanced skills like that found in the protective services plan.

Our next concern is with the Basic Vocational Pay Plan. All employees, in order to be motivated to excel in their duties, must have a feeling of self-worth and a realization that dedication to the job will be adequately rewarded. Our first recommendation for this grouping is to re-name it to Facilities Support Personnel in order to address part of the self-worth issue. Next, we feel that simply tying salaries to the market will result in increased turnover and lack of initiative for these employees. Augmenting the salaries with an attendance and/or an exceptional service incentive would ensure a more stable and productive workforce.

We cannot stress enough that success or failure of any new system rests with adequate staff training and administrative consistency. We feel strongly that the Division of Personnel Services in order to successfully implement this plan must have additional staff. We are concerned that assigning this huge new responsibility without augmenting staffing would be an invitation to disaster. We urge the Commission to include this issue within its report to the administration and to the legislature.

In our September 23, 2007 letter to the commission (please see attached), we addressed additional concerns such as naming conventions. We ask that these concerns also be considered in your deliberations.

Again, thank you for offering our organization yet another opportunity to provide input. I would be happy to address any questions you may have.