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TESTIMONY

To: Chairwoman Molly Baumgardner and Members of the Senate Committee on Education
From: Kent Selk - Driver Services Manager Kansas Department of Revenue
Date: January 27, 2022
Re: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 215 – Driver Education Programs

Good afternoon, Chairwoman and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Division of Vehicles supports the changes provided in Senate Bill 215. A stated goal for our division for 2022 is to expand and improve the working partnership with operators of the driver education programs. The division has implemented changes in the licensing process in the past two years which we believe could also supplement and enhance the driver's education program in Kansas. These changes include adding additional electronic services and development of a mobile drivers licensing staff, changes which could benefit the operation and flexibility of the driver's schools. Implementation of Senate Bill 215 would provide the opportunity to partner with the providers of the driver education program to enhance the training process for future Kansas drivers.

Kansas law assigns management authority for driver education amongst three different State agencies: Kansas Division of Vehicles, Kansas State Board of Education, and Kansas Board of Regents. These Agencies all believe it would be in the State's best interest if such licensing responsibility was centralized with one Agency, Kansas Division of Vehicles because: 1) promoting driver safety and qualifications are the division core issue of focus; and 2) students in driver education programs eventually must work with State's driver's license examiners; and 3) the division manages the central database that all driver education schools interact with.

This proposed amendment would simplify this process by centralizing this role into one agency.

There are a range of entities that may be licensed to perform driver education. There is an industry of private and public drive schools that assist license applicants with acquisition of a regular motor vehicle and/or motorcycle driver's licenses. These driver education programs may be a private commercial enterprise or associated with a State approved education district or school. There are similar public and private providers of commercial driver's license (CDL) education, but such CDL programs will normally require a greater time and monetary commitment.

Satisfaction of a driver education program, from a licensed provider, for a regular driver's license or motorcycle license is not a prerequisite to obtaining a license. However, completion of driver's education programs may benefit the applicant for the Kansas Division of Vehicles will rely upon such program completion to satisfy written and drive skills testing, that is normally conducted at the State driver's license exam station. The State of Kansas benefits from such programs for it improves driver safety and reduces the lines and speeds up appointment times for other license applicants.