

K. Univ. of Ka. Buildings & Grounds

# Bill would let students OK building

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TOPEKA—Students will be able to tell the Board of Regents whether they approve of the proposed building construction projects on campus if a bill now in a Kansas House committee is approved.

The bill would require a student vote before student fees are assessed for new building construction on Regents university campuses. The current bill is a watered-down version of legislation killed in the 1981 House session which required student approval before the Regents could increase fee assessments to finance a new project.

The House Ways and Means Committee will hold hearings on the bill today, and its sponsor, State Rep. Mike

Meacham, R-Wichita, said an amendment had been added to the bill to gain acceptance from legislators.

"The amendment takes a lot of the teeth out of it," Meacham said yesterday. "It has some weaknesses that way, but I guess the important thing is that there is some formal recognition of the students' input."

Steve Linenberger, legislative director for the Associated Students of Kansas, drafted the amendment, which makes a student referendum non-binding.

Student governments would administer the referendums and present the results to the Regents, but the Regents would have no obligation to obey the students' wishes.

"They'd have to take it into consideration, because it's there,"

Linenberger said. "It's more input for students."

SEVERAL BUILDING projects on the KU campus have been financed partly with student fees, including Wescoe Hall, Watkins Hospital, the Kansas Union and the Satellite Union.

Two of the projects that used student fees, Watkins Hospital in 1972 and the Satellite Union in 1977, were approved by student referendums. The others were not put to a student vote.

Watkins is the most expensive of the projects, costing each student a maximum of \$7. The projects will not be paid for until the mid- or late-1990s.

Linenberger said ASK did not object to using student fee money for student unions, as that is a standard policy at universities and all students make use of the unions.

But he said some students may never

set foot in some of the buildings they have helped finance.

Linenberger said he thought a student referendum, although not binding, would influence the Regents' decisions.

"THE REGENTS I've spoken to said they thought it was an excellent idea," he said. "In the past, they started putting buildings on campus and students started paying extra fee money."

"We feel it's the state's responsibility to provide those kind of buildings."

But Ways and Means Committee Chairman Mike Hayden, R-Atwood, said last year he opposed the bill because the students who voted on the referendum would not be the ones to use the buildings and would be imposing a tax on future students.

Meacham said he did not think the committee would object to the amended bill. He said he thought that although the Regents would not have to go along with the student vote, they probably would listen to the students.

"But it's going to vary from campus to campus, from project to project," he said.

Patty Gerstenberger, a KU member of ASK, said she thought the Regents would pay attention to the vote because they would dislike going against public opinion.

"It isn't fair to use our money without asking us," she said.

Linenberger said he thought the amended bill was less "threatening" to the Regents, giving it a better chance of passage this year.