

I am writing this in reference to House Bill 2378, which would effectively do away with the Kansas Teacher of the Year Program (KTOY) as we know it. I was a member of the 2010 KTOY team. As a part of the program my team presented at over 20 KS colleges, visited more than 10 different school districts, and represented the teaching profession at the state level. Not only does this program allow teachers' voices to be heard and provide practical training for future teachers, but it also allows for much needed professional development through taking part in the program.

I have no doubt that most school districts will be cutting back on professional development opportunities in the future due to legislative budget cuts. The KTOY program has been the best professional development opportunity I have been a part of in 17 years of teaching. This program doesn't just benefit the teachers who are nominated as teachers of the year, but it also benefits the districts they represent at a much more reasonable cost to the districts than almost any other professional development. Opportunities like this, which are low cost to districts, should be expanded, not cut.

Doing away with the KTOY program as we know it would send yet another message to educators across the state that they are not valued by our legislature. In a profession that has taken huge hits in the political and financial arenas, doing away with this program would cause the morale that is declining to continue in that direction, while encouraging potential teachers to look for jobs in other states where the teaching profession is more valued by our legislative representatives. Please do NOT change the KTOY program. Do not hesitate to contact me if I can answer any questions you might have or can make myself any more clear regarding this matter or any others. Thank you,

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