

03-11-15 HB2378 Opp Written KPerez

My name is Katie Perez. I am an Instructional Coach at Morgan Elementary in USD 308. I am a member of the 2014 Kansas Teacher of the Year Team, serving as the Region 1 Elementary Teacher of the Year.

I am writing today in opposition to House Bill 2378, which would establish the Kansas legislature award for teaching excellence program.

The primary reason for my opposition to this bill is that it would prohibit the Kansas Department of Education from administering a teacher recognition and award program, resulting in the end of the current Kansas Teacher of the Year program.

My experience in the program last year ranks in the greatest honor that has been bestowed upon me in my career thus far. However, it was not the monetary award, the recognition at the banquets, or the title that carried the honor. The value in the KTOY program as it exists today is in the professional development opportunities that it provides for not only the members of the team, but also pre-service and veteran teachers around the state.

I remember when I was in the School of Education at KU listening to the 2004 Kansas Teacher of the Year team present to my introduction to education course, their expertise, encouragement, and professionalism inspired me. As I traveled with my team last spring, I know that we had the same impact on pre-service and veteran teachers across our great state. Additionally, the opportunity to work with my KTOY was the most successful collaborative experience I have had in my career. I went into the program a teacher worthy of recognition, and after the year, I feel I am now a far better educator.

While HB 2378 is a welcomed nod of appreciation for educators by the legislature, I feel that retiring the KSDE model of the KTOY program would be a disservice to current and future teachers in the state of Kansas.

Thank you.