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RE: **Opposition Letter on HB 2457**

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Dear Kansas House Education Committee,

My name is Patricia Welicky of Bonner Springs, KS and I come to you today to voice my opposition to Education House Bills 2457. It is true I have repeatedly contacted committee leaders and my own local legislative body on topics effecting the education of my children and Kansas Education at large. So, it is no surprise that I come to you today to ask you to kill Kansas House Bill **2457** in committee. In full discloser, I am a registered Republican and the School Board President of Unified School District 204. However, my Role as mother to two school aged children has heightened my resolve to voice my opposition to House Bills that will or may negatively impact students and local school districts. Today I am voicing direct opposition to **House Bill 2457**. Understanding others will come to you with well thought out opposition papers and eloquent testimony in the affirmative and negative, I would like to speak to you frankly but with respect on my opinion on Educational matters.

It is my understanding that HB 2457 has the intention to take students out of public schools and send them to private school and to expand the program that provides state tax credits to make it happen. I am concerned that by doing this a private school under the expanded program could be selective in the type of students they admit or exclude, and are not required to report on student's success or financial operations. When I was the Republican Chair of the Wyandotte County, there were a few Republicans and Tea party members that espoused the merits of Charter and Private Schools but neglected to mention the exclusive manner that Charter and Private Schools have. For instance, the Public School System must take in Costly Special Education Students with a wide array of physical, mental and social issues as well students with limited or no English, as well as students that have various sexual orientation labels. In addition, we are charged with educating each and every child in the State of Kansas regardless of their abilities. I believe without a doubt that education bill 2457 is categorically unfair to local school districts. We are asked to follow to a set of rules Charter and Private Schools do not have to or do so in a limited manner.

In my school district, the 1934 Mcdaniels School Building stands today in testament to the character and determination of the citizens of Bonner springs now and in the past to the education of children within their district lines. So, I am confused by the actions of state legislatures that would author bills like 2457 seemingly designed to strip local school districts of students. While allowing the State of Kansas to differ their responsibilities of educating all the **children of Kansas**. In my case, a neighboring school district has a special school charter like school that only a few of the students in their district are lucky enough to go to and when they are not allowed in, they attempt to enroll in my district; due to limited resources and support from the State we turn them away. It is my belief that our focus needs to be on all our students. I ask you why doesn't the Education Committee spend more time figuring out how all of our schools can enlighten and educate Kansas students in the best possible way rather than offering bills like HB 2457. Opening the door wide to potentially allow Charter and Public Schools to take the best and the brightest public school students out of local school districts by expanding tax credits, does nothing to truly revolutionize the way we offer Education.

Before considering bills like HB 2457, I urge all of you to go back to your local districts and sit down with both their boards and citizens that elect you and find out what the impact of your decisions have on your local public schools and school districts in western Kansas. The times of your committee meetings make it difficult for many to make the trip to Topeka. I urged to kill this HB 2457 until a more reasonable solution can be found. Sometimes doing nothing is better than adding to the problem.

Warm Regards,

Patricia Welicky of Bonner Springs, KS