



Mark Desetti
Written Testimony, HB 2457
House Education Committee
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Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to House Bill 2457.

As you know we opposed the original bill creating these tax credits. This bill is a radical expansion of a program that will do damage to our public schools, the state budget, and the education of low-income students.

Current law limits these tuition tax credits to at-risk children in Title I Priority or Focus schools. That is, they were sold to you as a way to provide choice to struggling children in struggling schools. This bill opens the door to all students without regard to how they are performing in school or if the school is a highly successful one. It opens the door to students who are not now in public schools. It opens the door to half the families in Kansas by setting the only requirement as a family at or below 250% of the federal poverty rate. For a family of four (two parents, two children) this is \$60,625.

Median household income in Kansas in 2015 was \$52,504. Median family income in Kansas in 2015 was \$66,425.

The changes contained in HB 2457 would do the following:

- Remove any requirement that the program serve children with learning needs
- Encourage “cherry picking” of high achieving students
- Remove \$12.5 million from potential state revenue that could be used to better fund existing public schools
- Allow state dollars to be used to send children to unaccredited, unaccountable private and home schools

As legislators you often ask about the return on investment related to programs. What is the return on investment of an economic development incentive? You question whether or not our schools are producing results worthy of your investment. What is relationship between spending and learning outcomes? Yet in this bill you are apparently willing to give away \$12.5 million in taxpayer money on schools that won't report results to you. This is contrary to every question you ask regarding the expenditure of state dollars.

We would urge you to reject this bill and return that \$12.5 million to the state general fund for the purpose of serving all Kansans.