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Written Testimony in opposition of HB 2457
2/2/15

Respectfully submitted by,
Katherine Kersenbrock-Ostmeyer, Director Special Education
Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center and Kansas Council for Exceptional
Children legislative representative.

Honorable Chair Highland and Committee Members,
Thank you for the opportunity to address this bill and thank you in advance for your
considerations of my concerns.

Whether it is called a "tax credit or scholarship," I am opposed and concerned about
the effects of HB 2457 for our children and youth. Noted below are 3 specific concerns
related to this legislation:

1) **Public accountability** is notably lacking for private schools, whereas local
education agencies are held accountable by federal and state laws and regulations.
Public schools must adhere to requirements for highly qualified staff, but private
schools typically are not held to these requirements. Private schools are not obligated
to participate in the regular assessments toward measuring student achievement, nor
are they bound to the requirement of an individualized education program (IEP).
Furthermore, no on-going general supervision of the educational program is conducted
by the state or local education agencies.

2) **Equal access** provisions for all is not a requirement. Private schools are allowed to
pick and choose whom they will enroll.

3) And, finally and perhaps most importantly---**Public funds should fund public
education**, not private education. There is a lack of fiscal protections to guarantee that
public education funds are not diverted to scholarships at the expense of the children
and youth remaining in the public schools.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to provide written testimony on this
important topic.

For additional information concerning Tax Credits, Opportunity Scholarships, and
Vouchers link to the following sites:

<https://www.cec.sped.org/Policy-and-Advocacy/More-Issues/Vouchers>

<http://dianeravitch.net/category/vouchers/>

<http://www.nea.org/home/19133.htm>