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RE: **Opposition Letter on HB 2504**

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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, **2504**. 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 **2504** 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 2504**. 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 2504 has the intention to require every county with 10,000 or fewer students to be a single district. My fear is the bill would change longstanding school district communities. In my case;

Prior to 1963, Bonner Springs Schools had the designation of #27 then in 1963 the area of Edwardsville, Bonner Springs and parts of KCK became Unified School District 204. **My opposition to HB 2504** is not about the possibility of losing my seat on the local school board but from a citizen's point of view. Part of my concern is a result with past experiences with redistricting and consolidation of services. I have been a lifelong resident of Wyandotte county however due to a vote primarily of KCK residents' years ago resulted in the merging of KCK with the County of Wyandotte. For residents of Bonner Springs and Edwardsville we lost our identity as a County and a feeling that our voices were lost in the Unified Government of Wyandotte County. Which meant, that now KCK was in charge and our two small cities were not. **Now I am deeply concerned that my community is again facing the possibility that our local school district will be swallowed up by our bigger neighbors and we will lose local control of issues concerning our local schools.**

Like many small school districts, we are concerned that the identity of our small local school districts is rapidly wasting away in the efficiency reports of the Kansas State Legislatures. In 1934, my local school district with the help of Federal Work Grants built a beautiful art deco Mcdaniel Elementary School which is still in use today by our district. Yet if we are forced to merge as a result of an ambiguous re- districting plan by the state legislatures, we may lose our iconic two story building standing atop main street. Why? because we have lost our voice to the whims of a centralized office somewhere in KCK. Please Stop the eroding of our small towns and local school districts and vote in the negative on House Bill 2504.

We use to stand for something in Kansas, decimating the local small school districts is not the answer for the State Financial Woes. I stand with all those that oppose this Bill for the sake of the integrity of our long standing communities and a desire to Keep Kansas Strong. Allowing the crumbling of our local communities does not serve the general welfare of the State or the Nation. It is a hope that my fellow Republicans and Respected Democrats will come together to realize the negative impact losing local control can have on a community already this year we have lost our local newspaper. I am deeply concerned that the legislatures are not listening to us. Just because large crowds do not form for various bills does not mean we the voters are not watching. Please kill the bill in committee!!!!!!

Warm Regards,

Patricia Welicky of Bonner Springs, KS