



MainStream Coalition
5960 Dearborn Street, #213
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★ Rational Voices for Irrational Times ★

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Testimony to Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Chair, Senator Ty Masterson

Tuesday, February 3, 2015 Committee Meeting, 10:30 AM Room 548-S

Dee Heideman, Assist 785-296-3775, Rm 545-S Dee.Heideman@senate.ks.gov

Position – Oppose

School Districts Supplemental Aid ([SB 71](#))

Chairman Masterson and Committee Members,

MainStream Coalition is a non-partisan, grassroots organization that grew from an outpouring of concerns over the infringement of governmental separation of powers and of church and state. We seek to uphold good governance and traditional Kansas moderate values, including support for public education.

MainStream was established 22 years ago when the current school finance formula was first being implemented, to correct for the previous formula's over dependence on local property taxes and their inherent disparity in wealth from one community to the next. MainStream supported equitable and adequate funding for our public schools then, just as we do now. We have remained engaged in the Kansas governance process up through the recent Supreme Court and District Court school finance rulings of 2006 and 2014.

In alignment with our long standing support for policies that promote high quality public education, **we strongly oppose** the senate's rescission bill 71. We oppose the proposed cuts of more than \$39 million from K12 classrooms, within the next four months. SB 71 calls for the equivalent of a nearly \$100 million cut to the annual public education operational budget, at a time when the state's own legislative post-audit research division studies have demonstrated that our K12 classrooms are chronically underfunded, by at least \$550 million (<http://www.kslpa.org/docs/reports/05pa19.pdf>, p.6).

MainStream Coalition is here today to encourage the Senate Ways and Means Committee to retain the current method for computing supplemental general state aid (local option budget) and to exercise responsible governance. Within the first weeks of taking office, the governor declared that "educating children is to the state government as national defense is to the federal government: it is the state's primary function ... And that is as it should be" (2011).

We urge you to reconsider the real cause of this budget crisis. We urge this committee to remember your campaign promises and invest in the future of Kansas children, rather than continue down this reckless tax policy path.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandi Fisher, Executive Director
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