

Testimony before the  
Senate Ways and Means Committee  
in opposition to  
**SB 71 – School districts; amending the supplemental general state aid calculation**

by  
Devin Wilson, member of **Game On for Kansas Schools**  
grassroots advocacy organization, 501c4

February 3, 2015

Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee:

I came here today as a parent of public school students and as a member of the Game On for Kansas Schools leadership team. I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the proposed bill to amend the supplemental general state aid calculation and to explain our opposition to **SB 71**.

[Game on for Kansas Schools](#) is a nonpartisan grassroots effort among Kansans who share a belief in high-quality public education as a right of all Kansas students. We advocate for Kansas public schools to ensure our teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members all have the resources necessary to deliver quality education to all Kansas students. We inform the community about issues and legislation affecting students in Kansas. The Game On leadership team currently includes over 30 members, representing the spectrum of education stakeholders (parents, educators, and other community advocates), with children attending more than 25 different Kansas public schools. Our followers on social media include over 4,000 people from all over Kansas. We are nonpartisan and welcome anyone interested in protecting Kansas public education. Our efforts include raising awareness, evaluating policy, accountability, public discourse, and contributing solutions where real problems exist.

Our most significant objection to this bill is that it would reduce funding to numerous Kansas school districts in the current year. School districts cannot operate at a deficit, and purchasing and employment decisions for the 2014-2015 school year have already been made. We cannot understand how the schools serving our children can function with funding cuts occurring at this point in the year. Several of the districts that would be affected by this bill recently appealed to voters to extend their LOBs pursuant to the authority granted in HB 2506. Many of the members of Game On's leadership team reside in the Shawnee Mission School District. We were among the thousands of patrons who voted to continue our LOB funding. This bill would wipe out that funding in the middle of our academic year, nullify one of the main benefits of HB 2506 and ignore the will of the voters of districts like ours. As a chart published by KSDE (<http://www.ksde.org/Agency/FiscalandAdministrativeServices/SchoolFinance/WhatsNew.aspx>) shows, Shawnee Mission School District would face over \$4 million in operational funding cuts for this academic year. We believe that our schools currently need more funding, not less, and our children's schools should not have to absorb significant cuts to their funding at this point.

In addition to opposing this bill on fiscal grounds, we also oppose it on policy grounds. We have heard repeated complaints about school districts' reserve funds, but a bill such as this one shows why we believe many districts have been reluctant to reduce their cash reserves. If this legislature wants less cash in school district reserves, they should not make mid-year cuts to districts, especially in light of the state's current financial situation.

We urge you to oppose **SB 71** and vote NO on this bill if it comes to a vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Devin Wilson  
Leadership Team Member, Game On for Kansas Schools  
Shawnee Mission, KS

Hearing: Tuesday, February 3 at 10:30, Room 548-S  
50 copies delivered to Dee Heideman, Committee Assistant, Senate Ways and Means Committee, Room 545-S  
Copy emailed to [Dee.Heideman@senate.ks.gov](mailto:Dee.Heideman@senate.ks.gov)