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Testimony to the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

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BILL NUMBER: SB 128, Opportunity Tax Credit

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 128. While I am sure this bill is well intended, the ultimate outcome will divert public funding to private schools. It has grown in scope and would lead to a larger negative impact on students in public schools. Additionally, this legislation incentivizes giving to private schools over giving to a nonprofit.

The problem with diverting these funds is that it is not serving ALL children in KS. These funds go to schools who can select and turn away students. If the intent of providing funding for a private school is to allow students in "failing schools" to have another option, the fact that private schools can exercise selectivity can make the situation worse. If students who require special education needs are turned away from private schools, the burden increasing lies on public schools, who accept all students. The diversion of these funds not only leads to less funding in general but makes it harder to help students who need it most and don't have other options. Unless private schools are willing to accept all students who apply, they should not be allowed the opportunity to have public tax dollars.

I also have a concern regarding diverting public funds to private institutions who do not have the same oversight as public schools. With recent attempts in legislating what is taught in public schools, this seems to be a bit hypocritical. This legislation would divert funds from public to private schools without financial and academic accountability and oversight while incentivizing private individuals and corporations to invest in them for an enticing tax break. This seems unfair and unwise.

In closing, I ask that you oppose bill SB 128. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jennifer Ancell
Shawnee, KS