

February 9, 2023

Testimony to the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

NAME: Donna E Field Martin

TITLE: Kansas Taxpayer, alumni of Kansas schools, parent of two young adults who went to Kansas schools, and concerned neighbor

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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.

I was born in Kansas and attended public schools in Kansas. One of the things I knew as I was growing up was that the public schools in Kansas were strong and well supported. When I completed my college and graduate school education, I found a job in the Kansas City area and one of the reasons my husband and I chose to live on the Kansas side of the state line was the public schools. We knew the public schools were excellent and that they afforded opportunities for all types of students. Our two children attended the public schools and they indeed did provide opportunities like advanced classes, gifted programs, and International Baccalaureate tracks to our children. (I do remember that for the advanced math class in 6th grade, since it was offered before the regular school day, there were Catholic school students who attended and the bus made a special stop to drop those students off. I believe taxpayer dollars paid for those students to attend those classes and for the bus service.)

During the Brownback years however, we became aware that support for public schools was not a guarantee in the state of Kansas. Deep cuts were made as my children advanced into middle and high school. We saw these cuts in the classrooms and in the activities that were offered. Parents were asked to pay for more things that previously had been provided – or there were things that were just cut out. Neither of these things should happen when we are paying tax dollars for our public schools. Services for kids require special education services have been cut and those services have not been restored fully.

The bottom line is that tax dollars should go to support public schools. They should not be spent to support parents to send their children to private schools which are not required to serve every student that walks through their doors or to meet all the standards the public schools need to meet. Your proposal will significantly damage public schools – and particularly those in rural areas. Your efforts to tear down the public schools in Kansas hurt everyone in Kansas. As I said in the beginning, the public schools have always been one of the top reasons why people choose to live in this state. Please don't tear down one of our strengths.

I respectfully ask you to vote “no” on SB128

Donna E. Field Martin
Leawood, KS