

NAME: Eileen Knoblauch
TITLE: Kansas Citizen and parent
EMAIL ADDRESS: eileen.knoblauch@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only
DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136. I am the mother to three children in the Blue Valley Public School District of Kansas. My husband and I rely heavily on the great education our children receive in the public school system. Not only general education, but the special education two of our three children have needed have allowed them to be successful and thriving students today. This will only help them to be intelligent and good contributing members of our community, state and country in the future. When my husband and I moved to Kansas City 11 years ago, we sought out the best public schools, not only for our children's education, but also knowing that strong public school systems create strong educated and economical communities. Public funds **DO NOT** belong in private schools. This is why I **STRONGLY oppose HB 2136** that would divert public funds into private schools.

For starters, the Tax Credit Scholarship program already exists in Kansas. There are still hundreds of thousands of students still eligible under the current guidelines who are not utilizing scholarships, thus there is no need for expansion.

Second, expanding the program to private school students will only take opportunities from the very students the Tax Credit Scholarship program was intended to help. Instead of expanding, accountability should be added to the current program to understand why these at-risk students aren't receiving scholarships. Additionally, private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind. Expanding the program to private school students, leaves fewer spots for the at-risk students the program was again intended to help.

Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will also divert even more funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education, to subsidize the private choices of some parents

and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas. This program already allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors. Expanding the tax credit to 100% is even more egregious. The Tax Credit Scholarship program, like most voucher programs, is welfare for the wealthy.

Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that provide oversight for our tax dollars. We should not be expanding this program that already funnels tax payer dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions. This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a personal choice to receive a religious or other non-public education. Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education.

Furthermore, Our tax dollars should not go to private schools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children. There are no controls in place to ensure eligible at-risk students who apply for a scholarship are granted one, as private schools are allowed to set their own admission standards. And there are no controls in place to ensure those who do receive scholarships receive a quality education. Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars.

Lastly, rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options. The Tax Credit Scholarship program primarily benefits those in suburban areas of our state. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka.

For all of these reasons, I ask you to **please vote NO on Bill HB2136.**

Thank you for your time, attention and consideration,

Eileen Knoblauch

Leawood, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Vicki Kohl

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: vmkohl54@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

This program has the same pitfalls as any other voucher scheme as it diverts **public** tax dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions. The state government should not allow such lack of oversight and discrimination in any school which accepts public tax dollars, whether directly from taxes or, in this case, from a diversion of public tax dollars.

Additionally, it is a lucrative tax avoidance scheme that is especially beneficial to corporations and wealthy donors. Allowing the such entities to reduce their taxes to benefit private schools should not be allowed.

The expansion proposed by HB 2136, the Tax Credit Scholarship program, is clearly not needed.

Plenty of students under the current guidelines are still eligible for the Tax Credit Scholarship program. There is no need to expand. In fact, expanding the program to private school students will just take limited spots from at-risk students who supposedly were the ones in need.

In 2023, only 1,340 students were participating despite 230,000 public school students being eligible. There were not significant changes to these numbers in 2024.

Because there is no data or accountability within the Tax Credit Scholarship program, we don't know if eligible students:

- applied to a private school and were denied admission because of their religion
- applied to private school but couldn't pass academic admission criteria
- live in one of the 60+ counties in Kansas where there are no private school options
- have special needs that private schools aren't required to accommodate
- are happy with their public schools and thus there is no real need for this voucher program

These voucher programs aren't available to all. **Most importantly**, public dollars belong to our public schools that accept and educate all children. Diverting our state general funds to private schools undermines public education funding.

Please vote no on bill HB 2136.

Vicki Kohl
Kansas Citizen
Olathe

NAME: Jeanne Koontz
TITLE: Kansas Citizen and Parent
EMAIL ADDRESS: koontz.jeanne@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only
DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your service on this committee working to ensure all Kansas kids have access to a great education. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

I am currently a parent of two children who attend school in the Hutchinson School District and receive Special Education services for Gifted. Public schools are vital to our communities:

- They help us have an educated society which ensures a qualified workforce.
- They provide education for all.
- They provide a space for kids to encounter and experience people from different cultures, different socio-economic backgrounds, different races, and different abilities. I believe this leads to a more welcoming and compassionate society.

This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice. In the rural parts of our state, including Hutchinson, there are no private school choices outside of religious schools. Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans choosing not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education that is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

I implore you to protect public school and vote no on HB 2136.

Jeanne Koontz
Hutchinson

NAME: Megan Langford
TITLE: Parent in Shawnee Mission School District
EMAIL ADDRESS: langford.megan@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: HB 2136
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only
DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

Thank you for reading my testimony and listening to the concerns of Kansans. I am writing to voice my opposition to HB 2136.

I grew up in public schools, and my kids are growing up in public schools. Our public schools not only educate our kids, they prepare them for being integral members of society. A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students. Diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system.

Public dollars need to stay in public schools. Public schools accept and educate ALL students. They cannot pick and choose which students to accept. Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind. Vouchers like this tax credit program do not provide real choice. Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans choosing not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education, which is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

Please vote no on HB 2136. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Megan Langford

NAME: Jordan Lichtenauer

EMAIL ADDRESS:

jordan.oakley10@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:

Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:

Written only

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill

number HB 2136.

This bill is a detriment to our rural counties that will not benefit from a tax credit opportunity. These rural counties will not be funded through the public funds that they are dependent on if we pass this bill.

My husband and I both attended rural public schools and our children will both attend public schools. I'm continuously disappointed in the efforts to take away funding from my children's education to benefit those who will not be held to the same standard.

Please vote no on HB 2136

**Sincerely,
Jordan Lichtenauer**

Ottawa, KS

NAME: Jacqueline Lightcap

TITLE: Parent and school board member in USD 437 Auburn-Washburn

EMAIL ADDRESS: jacquielightcap@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to HB 2136. Despite being called a “tax credit,” it’s still a voucher program that will cut revenue to our public schools, causing harm to Kansas public schools and shortchanging the education of our youngest Kansans.

Here are a few reasons why educational “tax credits” or vouchers are bad for Kansas’s public schools.

- **They hurt student achievement.** In states that have implemented a similar program, unaccredited school vouchers hurt student achievement more than the 2020 pandemic (sources below).
- **They undermine public schools.** They divert resources away from public schools, attended by 90% of students, to fund the education of a few select students.
- **Private school tax credits or vouchers do not offer real choice.** Private schools can choose their students. Public schools are bound by law to accept all students.
- **Tax credits or vouchers fail to provide accountability to taxpayers.** Vouchers for private schools do not have appropriate oversight, which is critical when using public tax dollars.

As a parent to two products of Kansas K-12 schools (one is in college and one is a high school senior this year), I can personally speak to the quality of our public education system in preparing students for postsecondary success. Seven years of serving on a public school board has also shown me the amazing work done by our schools on a daily basis. Public schools keep students at the center of their budgetary decisions; why would we want to divert funding from them, making it harder to do their critical work?

Public tax dollars should be used to fund services benefitting **all** citizens. I urge you to vote no on HB 2136.

Jacqueline Lightcap

Topeka

Sources: R. Joseph Waddington & Mark Berends, [Impact of the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program: Achievement Effects for Students in Upper Elementary & Middle School](#), 37 J. of Policy Analysis & Mgmt. 4, 738-808 (Aug. 2018); Atila Abdulkadiroğlu, Parag A. Pathak, & Christopher R. Walters, [Free to Choose: Can School Choice Reduce Student Achievement?](#), 10 Am. Econ. Journal: Applied Econ. 1, 175-206 (Jan. 2018); David Figlio & Krzysztof Karbownik, Inst. (July 2016); U.S. Dep’t of Educ., [Evaluation of Ohio’s EdChoice Scholarship Program: Selection, Competition, & Performance Effects](#), Fordham [Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program: Impacts Two Years After Students Applied](#) (June 2018).



Be informed.
Get involved.
Vote.

Patty Logan

Chair, Stand Up Blue Valley: Families for Our Schools

standupbv@gmail.com

HB 2136

Expanding student eligibility under the tax credit for low income students scholarship program, increasing the amount of the tax credit for contributions made pursuant to such program and providing for aggregate tax credit limit increases under certain conditions.

Opponent testimony

Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2025

Stand Up Blue Valley: Families for Our Schools is a parent and patron advocacy group in the Blue Valley School District. We advocate for legislation that supports Blue Valley Schools and work to help our community understand the importance of their votes to our schools.

We oppose any diversion of tax money to private schools. We oppose any expansion of the Tax Credit Scholarship Program, and we oppose the addition of any other program to divert tax money away from public schools to private schools.

Stand Up Blue Valley opposes the provision in HB 2136 that would increase the tax credit from 70% tax credit to 100%. This would allow a donor to pay into a private school tuition fund and credit **every penny** of that payment toward their Kansas taxes. This type of tax credit is not available to any taxpayer for any other donation, no matter how philanthropic. **Assigning this very special designation to the funding of private schools is not in the best interest of any Kansas student, any Kansas school district, or any Kansas citizen - other than the few who will use this to their financial benefit as they fund private schools of their own choosing.**

HB 2136 would **add eligibility** for students whose parents meet certain arbitrary employment or vocation specifications and students who are *or ever were* in foster care. These designations serve only to increase the number of students eligible for this unproven program. **There is no evidence to support the notion that private school education would benefit the added categories of students, like the students originally designated for program inclusion.**

Private schools often include religious curriculum. **While we fully support the right of parents to send their students to any religious school they choose, we don't believe our tax dollars should be paying for religious education.**

Private schools are not required to accept or retain any student. We are aware of Blue Valley families whose special needs students were not able to attend BV-area private schools due to their needs not being met there. Expansion of eligibility for students to use Tax Credit Scholarships to attend private school expands the ability of private schools to benefit from accepting/choosing students who are easier to educate and leaving a disproportionate number of students with learning disabilities, physical differences, and behavioral issues for public schools to educate.

Blue Valley taxpayers understand that our taxes go to support our excellent public schools, which provide a quality education to over 22,000 students, support over 3000 jobs in our area, and turn out graduates who return to enhance our community. Our Blue Valley Schools are the backbone of our local economy and result in high home values as businesses and people move here for the schools. We disagree with the premise that some taxpayers would be allowed to get a credit on their taxes (thereby lowering the amount of taxes they are paying) in order to use their money to fund private schools. We disagree with the premise that private schools should be given tax money.

If philanthropically-minded individuals wish to fund scholarships for low income students to attend private schools, by all means they should do that. They should NOT, however, be allowed to deduct 100% of that sum from the tax they owe to the state of Kansas. If private schools wish to provide scholarships for students they choose to admit, by all means they should do that, using the many mechanisms available to them and already in use - but they should not be allowed to use tax money to do so.

We fully support the right of parents to determine whether public school, private school, or home schooling is best for each child in their family. We do not believe the taxpayers of Kansas should pay for that choice.

Stand Up Blue Valley remains opposed to the original Tax Credit Scholarship Program and we oppose any and all attempts to expand the diversion of state tax revenue to private schools. **We urge you to vote no on HB 2136.**

Jamie Mast
Parent
jamiemast@gmail.com
Bill HB 2136
Opponent
WRITTEN ONLY
February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136. I appreciate your time and willingness to learn about my opposition to bill HB 2136 and hope that my perspective will be helpful in considering what happens with this bill.

I am so proud to have been born and raised in Belleville, KS and educated in public school in that rural setting. I still care fiercely for that community, as well as rural Kansas communities in general, even though I now live in Shawnee. For this reason, I strongly oppose bill HB 2136 because passing this bill would take money and opportunities from the rural communities that make up most of Kansas and redistribute to people who have access to many more opportunities as it is.

Though my four sons, who attend USD 232 De Soto, have plenty of public and private school options available to them in Shawnee, my niece and nephew, who attend USD 109 Republic County, do not. By implementing HB 2136, money and resources would be redistributed to the settings that have private schools available, mainly urban settings, leaving those without these options to pay for it.

More succinctly, my primary concerns with bill HB 2136 are:

- This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice anyway.
- A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system.
- There are no controls in place to ensure those receiving these tax credits are providing the children with a quality education or any education at all. Kansans expect accountability for how our tax dollars are being used.
- Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.

In closing, as written, HB 2136 is not fair to all Kansans, and has few safeguards to prevent fraud. Our rural communities desperately need their public schools to survive and thrive, and HB 2136 will very likely have the exact opposite impact on these communities.

Please vote NO on bill HB 2136.

Jamie Mast
Parent
Shawnee, KS

NAME: Anne Melia

TITLE: Lifelong Kansan and product of Kansas Public Education

EMAIL ADDRESS: melia.anne.s@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

My family has multiple generations of proud Kansas public school graduates, K-12 through college. My husband is a recently retired Kansas public school teacher. We chose to stay in Kansas after we graduated from college because of the strong tradition of excellent public education. However, over the past 20+ years it has been a continual fight with our legislature to adequately fund our schools and this is ruining our tradition of excellence in public education.

Leadership in the legislature is continually trying to expand the voucher program beyond its original intent, which was to provide low-income (at-risk) students with an opportunity to attend a private school. I am frustrated that this latest expansion would:

- Open the program up to kids in private school who have never even attended a public school
- Increase the tax credit received by “donors” to the program from 75% to a 100% dollar for dollar tax credit.
- Allow for an increase in the program cap from \$10 million to \$20 million

The donation limit per “donor” (corporation or individual) is \$500,000. Any donation will provide a dollar for dollar reduction in the taxpayer’s tax liability. “Donors” funnel money to private schools and are reimbursed in full by the state. If the tax liability is less than the donated amount, the tax credit can be carried forward to future years.

This is nothing more than a tax avoidance scheme which only benefits corporations and the wealthy while reducing the state general fund used to fund our public schools, maintain our roads and bridges, and more. This is not the way the State of Kansas should be spending our public dollars.

Therefore, I am asking you to vote no on bill HB 2136

Anne Melia
Prairie Village, KS



House Committee on Education
Opponent Testimony (Written Only) HB 2136
February 5, 2025
Submitted by: Dr. Tonya Merrigan, Superintendent
Email: tmerrigan@bluevalleyk12.org

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these written comments in opposition to **HB 2136**, which would expand student eligibility under the tax credit for low-income students scholarship program, increase the amount of the tax credit for contributions made pursuant to such program and provide for aggregate tax credit limit increases under certain conditions.

Blue Valley has a student population of more than 22,400 and consistently ranks in the top tier of high performing schools, both in the state and in the nation. (See "Quick Facts" at the end of testimony.)

The primary goal of the Blue Valley district is **to ensure every student attending our schools has the educational programming and opportunities, delivered by quality educators, to allow them to thrive long after they leave our doors.** We embrace every student who walks through our doors and always work to provide them with the tools to succeed.

The Blue Valley Board of Education has a long-standing priority position that states:

[Blue Valley] opposes public funding of private schools, including offering public tax credits that decrease state revenue, that do not comply with the same standards and requirements of public-school districts.

As stated in our position, our Board believes that private schools receiving public dollars, even by a decrease in state revenue, must be held to the same standards, requirements, and governance as that required of public schools. In addition, it appears the fiscal note of expanding this program may reach \$20M. For these reasons, we must **strongly oppose** HB 2136.

We would like to express our thanks to this committee for its work toward improved student learning in Kansas and, as well, our commitment to work with the committee toward that end.

USD 229 Blue Valley Schools: Quick Facts

K-12 Student Enrollment	21,767	ACT District Composite Average*	22.9
Early Childhood—grade 12 Enrollment	22,450	ACT Statewide Average	19.2
Average Daily Attendance	94.4%	SAT District Average	1357
Graduation Rate	96.7%	SAT Statewide Average	1256
Teacher's with Master's Degree or Higher	76%	*with 91.6 % of graduates taking ACT	

KRIS MEYER
FORMER TITLE I SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND PARENT
KMEYERKC@GMAIL.COM
BILL NUMBER: HB 2136
OPPONENT
WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY
FEBRUARY 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to HB 2136. As a former Title I school principal with 16 years of service in public education, as well as a parent of two adopted children (from Kansas foster care) in Kansas public schools, I have witnessed the impact of legislative decisions on our schools, teachers, and students. Public dollars should be used for public schools—institutions that serve *all* students, regardless of background, income, or ability. HB 2136 expands a program that lacks oversight, diverts much-needed public funds to private schools, and ultimately undermines the commitment Kansas has made to its public education system.

This bill would:

- Open the program to private school students who have never attended a public school, further straying from the program’s original intent of supporting at-risk students.
- Expand eligibility beyond income-based needs to include children in foster care, military families, and children of police officers or firefighters—groups that already have access to public schools with support services in place.
- Increase the tax credit for donors from 75% to 100%, creating a tax avoidance loophole that allows corporations and wealthy individuals to funnel money to private schools while being fully reimbursed by the state.
- Raise the program cap from \$10 million to \$20 million, doubling the amount of public dollars diverted from the state general fund.

The most troubling aspect of this expansion is that it benefits private schools that can selectively admit students based on academic ability, religion, or special needs accommodations. Unlike public schools, **private institutions are not required to accept or support every student**. A program that allows tax dollars to flow into unregulated private institutions while public schools struggle with funding shortages is not in the best interest of Kansas students.

Additionally, **there is no demonstrated need for this expansion**. In 2023, only 1,340 students participated in the program despite 230,000 public school students being eligible. If this program were truly addressing an urgent need, we would see significantly higher participation rates under the existing guidelines. Instead, we have no accountability or transparency in how private schools select students, and we do not know why many eligible students are not participating.

HB 2136 is a tax avoidance scheme that benefits the wealthy while weakening Kansas's commitment to a strong, well-funded public education system. As a former principal, I know how crucial adequate funding is for providing quality education, supporting teachers, and ensuring that every child—no matter their circumstances—receives the resources they need to thrive. Instead of diverting tax dollars to private institutions, the legislature should prioritize fully funding special education and ensuring that all public schools have the resources necessary to serve every Kansas student.

I urge you to vote **NO** on HB 2136. Our children and educators are counting on us.

Respectfully,
Kris Meyer
Former Title I School Principal and Parent
De Soto, Kansas

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Christina Middleton

TITLE: Parent and Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: 8617 Greenwood Lane

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written-only testimony

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

I am a parent of two children in the Shawnee Mission School District. I actively volunteer with the Parent, Teacher, and Student Association. I currently serve on the Site Council for Shawnee Mission West High School and have served for the last 5 years.

I have once before given testimony to the House Committee on Education when I came to share my son's journey with Dyslexia in Kansas. I served on the Dyslexia Task Force, and we implemented sweeping changes to support the children of Kansas so that all children would learn to read.

I understand you have a bill to give my tax dollars to private families to pursue private education. This is devastating to children like mine who need extra services from their school. We are already underfunding special education dollars in the state of Kansas. And do you know what happens in a Private School if a student requires special education (IEP) services? They get bussed to public schools to meet their needs as mandated.

Public tax dollars belong to public schools:

- Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should use those tax dollars to fund special education fully.
- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that provide oversight for our tax dollars. We should not be expanding this

program that already funnels tax payer dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions.

- This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a personal choice to receive a religious or other non-public education.

In closing, I ask you to vote NO on bill HB 2136.

Christina Middleton

Lenexa, KS

From: [Sharon Miller](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Cc: [Susan Estes](#)
Subject: HB2136
Date: Monday, February 3, 2025 1:05:52 PM

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

Sharon Miller

Kansas Citizen

mmiller925@aol.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136 Opponent

Written only

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to let you know about my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

Leadership in the legislature is continually trying to expand this program beyond its original intent: to help low-income (at-risk) students attending one of the 100 lowest-performing public schools. This will allow students to get a good education and job. No longer depend on government assistance.

This bill: The donation limit per "donor" (corporation or individual) is \$500,000. Any amount donated will provide a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the taxpayer's tax liability. "Donors" funnel money to private schools and are fully reimbursed by the state. If the tax liability is less than the donated amount, the tax credit can be carried forward to future years.

This tax avoidance scheme can bring big benefits to corporations and the wealthy while reducing the state general fund used to fund our public schools, maintain our roads and bridges, and more.

I am asking you to vote no on bill HB 2136.

Sharon Miller
925 Coving Drive
Lawrence, KS. 66049

Lawrence, KS 66049

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Jennifer Millett

TITLE: VP of Event Strategy & Partnerships. Lifelong Kansan, mother to Declan Millett (junior Shawnee Mission East), Kennedy Millett (7th Indian Hills Middle School), Emery Millett 5th (Highlands Elementary)

EMAIL ADDRESS: Jennifer.millett119@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

I firmly believe a strong and prosperous Kansas is built on strong thriving neighborhoods. The foundation of a strong thriving neighborhood is a NEIGHBORHOOD school! This bill will allow funds to be removed from strong thriving neighborhoods and put them into tax exempt religious institutions. Please don't legislate to hurt our neighborhoods and/or those trying to rise up with a strong public school system. As Catholic my faith is founded in the choice to follow in HIS footsteps but this choice is mine, I would never want to force nor do I believe it in the best interest to force someone into a system of forced religion.

Please vote no on bill HB 2136

Jennifer Millett

VP of Event Strategy & Partnerships

Prairie Village, KS

Testimony in Opposition to Bill HB 2136
House Committee on Education
Date of Hearing: February 5, 2025

John Monaghan

Parent in USD497 school district
johnjmonaghaniii@gmail.com

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill HB 2136. I am a parent of children who attend public schools. I strongly oppose the school voucher bill and urge you to vote against it.

As someone who has experienced firsthand the value of public education, I can confidently say that our public schools are the foundation of our communities. They accept and educate every child, regardless of ability, background, or financial circumstances. Public schools do not pick and choose; they are a public service that uplifts society as a whole.

Public education is a public good. Our tax dollars should be invested in the schools that serve every child and are accountable to taxpayers. This bill diverts critical funding away from public schools and directs it to private schools that are not obligated to serve all children or to meet the same accountability standards.

One of the most troubling aspects of this bill is that private schools are not required to accept all children. Families with children who have special needs, disabilities, or who are learning English will find limited, if any, options in private schools. These students, along with countless others, will continue to rely on public schools for their education, but with fewer resources if this bill passes.

This is not true choice. It's a false promise that leaves many children behind.

This bill primarily benefits wealthier families, who already have the means to send their children to private schools. By providing tax credits, the state essentially helps wealthy families reduce their tax burden at the expense of our public schools and other critical public services. Rural taxpayers, in particular, will be subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas, even though rural communities often have no private school options.

Public education is not about individual benefit—it's about collective good. Just as we all contribute to public libraries, roads, and parks regardless of how often we use them, public schools are a shared investment in our state's future.

Public schools operate under rigorous oversight to ensure that taxpayer dollars are being used responsibly and effectively. Private schools, on the other hand, are not held to the same standards. There are no guarantees that public funds directed to private schools or homeschools through vouchers will be spent on quality education—or any education at all.

Kansans deserve transparency and accountability when it comes to how our tax dollars are spent. This bill undermines that principle.

I am deeply concerned about the negative impact this bill will have on rural communities. Public schools are often the heart of rural areas, providing not just education but also jobs, extracurricular opportunities, and a sense of community. Draining resources from these schools to fund private education in urban areas will harm rural students and communities that already face significant challenges.

I ask this committee to consider the long-term consequences of this bill. It diverts resources from our public schools, weakens the educational foundation of our state, and creates inequities that hurt our most vulnerable children. Instead of supporting voucher programs, let's work together to fully fund public education, including special education, and ensure that every child in Kansas has access to a high-quality education.

Please vote No on bill HB 2136

Thank you

John J Monaghan III
533 Lindley Dr
Lawrence, KS 66049

NAME: Amy Moore

TITLE: parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: amooredunn@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only testimony

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

I strongly oppose HB 2136. Eighteen years ago, my family specifically chose to move to Kansas for its excellent public schools. We have three children – one who graduated in 2023, another graduating in 2025, and our youngest in 2029. Our experience with Kansas public schools has been outstanding, particularly regarding special education services that our child received – services unavailable at local private schools. In fact, we regularly saw private school students coming to our public elementary school to access these essential services.

Public funds must remain in public schools for one fundamental reason: public schools serve ALL Kansas children. While private schools selectively choose their students, public schools welcome everyone. Most private institutions lack the resources and infrastructure to support students with special needs or English language learners. Furthermore, private schools operate without the rigorous oversight and accountability measures that ensure taxpayer dollars are properly invested in quality education.

In conclusion, public money should stay in public schools. Voucher programs effectively become subsidies for wealthy families while lacking proper oversight and accountability. There is no need for expansion when there are still hundreds of thousands of students eligible under the current guidelines who are not utilizing scholarships.

Please vote no on bill HB 2136

Amy Moore

Parent in the Shawnee Mission School District

Prairie Village

February 2nd, 2025

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony in strong opposition to HB 2135. This bill seeks to significantly expand the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program in Kansas, further diverting public tax dollars away from our public schools and into private institutions that lack the same level of accountability and oversight.

The original intent of the Tax Credit Scholarship program was to provide low-income, at-risk students with an opportunity to attend private schools. However, the continual expansion of this program by legislative leadership undermines that initial goal and exacerbates inequities in our education system. This latest expansion proposed in HB 2135 is especially concerning for several reasons:

1. **Redirecting Public Funds to Private Schools Without Oversight** Private schools that benefit from these diverted funds are not held to the same standards as public schools. They can deny admission based on various criteria, including disability status, academic history, or other subjective factors, which effectively limits access for many students who could benefit from additional educational opportunities.
2. **Diverting Funds from Public Schools to Students Who Have Never Attended Them** HB 2135 would allow students already in private schools—who have never attended a public school—to receive funding under the program. This shifts resources away from public schools that are constitutionally required to serve all children and redirects them to families who have already chosen private education, further straining public school budgets and limiting opportunities for those truly in need.
3. **Providing a Full 100% Tax Credit to Donors** Increasing the tax credit from 75% to 100% essentially turns this program into a state-funded subsidy for private schools. Donors would receive a dollar-for-dollar return on their contributions, creating an unfair financial incentive that depletes state tax revenue while benefitting a select group of private institutions. This approach removes necessary taxpayer accountability and transparency.
4. **Doubling the Program's Funding Cap** Raising the cap from \$10 million to \$20 million further accelerates the diversion of public dollars from our already underfunded public schools. At a time when public schools across Kansas are struggling with teacher shortages, classroom resources, and the need for infrastructure improvements, we should be focusing on strengthening our public

education system—not expanding a voucher program that primarily benefits private interests.

Kansas has a constitutional responsibility to provide a quality public education for all students, and expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program moves us in the wrong direction. Public dollars should remain in public schools, where they serve all children equitably, not be funneled into a system that lacks accountability and excludes students based on arbitrary criteria.

I urge you to reject HB 2135 and instead prioritize policies that strengthen and support our public education system, ensuring that every Kansas child has access to a high-quality education regardless of their background or financial situation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Eulalio Munoz Jr.

304 SE Hancock

Topeka, Kansas 66607

Taryn Myers

Kansas Citizen, USD 266 parent and Employee in USD 266 Maize Kansas School

tarynmyers@gmail.com

Bill HB 2136

Opponent

Written Testimony

February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 2136. As a parent of two children in USD 266, Maize, Kansas—one in 7th grade and the other in 10th—I have seen firsthand both the strengths and struggles of our public schools. In addition to my role as a parent, I have worked as an elementary school paraprofessional and currently serve as a substitute teacher across the district. My experience within the public school system has been overwhelmingly positive, but it has also opened my eyes to the many challenges our schools face.

Public schools already operate on limited resources, doing their best with what little they have. HB 2136 would only make this situation worse, further draining funding from schools that are already struggling. As the President of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), with eight years at the elementary level and four years—and counting—at the middle school level, I have witnessed firsthand how schools rely on community support to fill critical gaps. Unfortunately, not all schools have the benefit of a strong PTO to supplement their needs.

Special education departments, in particular, are already stretched thin. I have personally seen teachers and staff spend their own money on essential resources because state funding falls short. Redirecting public tax dollars to private schools—institutions that lack oversight and can deny admission for various reasons—will only exacerbate these inequities.

This bill disproportionately harms low-income families and rural communities. It primarily benefits the wealthy while placing an even greater burden on those already struggling. Reading through the tax credits outlined in this bill is heartbreaking because I see firsthand the students it will leave behind. HB 2136 does not take care of Kansas kids.

I urge you to reconsider the long-term consequences this bill will have on our public schools and the families who depend on them. Please vote no to bill HB 2136. Thank you for your time and for the work you do for our state.

Sincerely,

Taryn Myers

Maize, KS 67101

Kansas Citizen, USD 266 parent and Employee in USD 266 Maize Kansas School

tarynmyers@gmail.com

HB 2136 Opposition Testimony (Written-Only)

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Joseph Nicholas

TITLE: Private citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: joseph.h.nicholas@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: [choose one]

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opposition to bill HB 2136.

I oppose this bill for several reasons:

First, this bill will reduce funding for cash-strapped public schools and fund cash rich private schools. To be honest, it is shameful for a state that has historically had a well-funded, exemplary educational system to now have a system where public-school teachers regularly provide teaching supplies from their own pocket.

Second, this bill will increase the education gap between the haves and have-nots. As funds are taken away from public schools and given to private schools, the quality of education in Kansas public schools will undoubtedly decline. This will lead to more families who can afford private education sending their children to private schools, which, in turn, will further reduce funding for public schools. Eventually, we will be left with a two tier system where wealthy children have access to adequate education, and poor children do not. As we learned from Brown vs Topeka Board of Education "separate but equal" is not constitutional; "separate but unequal" is even worse.

Third, this bill, if enacted, will lead to a pointless waste of taxpayer dollars in defending inevitable lawsuits. Without a doubt, this legislation will be challenged, which could lead to a protracted and expensive court battle. Our current Attorney General is certainly not one to shy away from any lawsuit that garners him additional media exposure, but he doesn't have the best track record in winning them.

In short, this bill is nothing more than an attempted tax dodge by the wealthy at the cost of our children's education. I urge you to vote no on HB 2136 for the good of public education in Kansas.

Thank you for your time,
Joseph Nicholas
Leawood, 66206

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Ann Norbury

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: annknorbury@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: OPPONENT

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only Testimony

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

Today, I write to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

As a parent of three Shawnee Mission School District graduates, I value their public school education. Each daughter attended Kansas universities. And two daughters earned master's degrees.

As a former public school teacher, I champion public schools that serve ALL students. Public funds should support public schools! I am opposed to any voucher system that would direct funds to private schools. Private schools are not required to have accountability and can pick and choose their students.

I'm concerned about a tax credit voucher system that would drain funds from public schools, especially those in rural districts. Of the 105 counties in Kansas, more than 60 counties do not even have the option of a private school. In rural districts the public high school is the center of the community. This voucher plan would decimate rural public schools by directing funding to private schools in wealthy suburban areas. This is unfair! Your legislation should benefit all Kansas communities, not just a select few.

I encourage you to vote NO on HB 2136

Thank you,

Ann Norbury

Shawnee, KS 66203

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Melinda Parks

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, Parent of Kansas Educator

EMAIL ADDRESS: melindaparks85@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

I am a lifelong Kansan, having graduated from a rural Kansas high school and the University of Kansas. We raised our daughter in the Shawnee Mission School District, and she now teaches in the Turner School District.

I believe one of the best traits of our state historically has been our focus on quality public education. This was universally true across the state. Public education was important to my grandparents, to my parents who were educators, to my husband and I and to our children, who are all educators. Strong public schools are critical to the ongoing maintenance of high-quality communities where people want to live and work.

I am vehemently opposed to SB 75 and voucher programs in general. First and foremost, public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers. Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program. This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice. Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans who choose not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to **fully fund special education** that is currently underfunded by \$173 million. Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share.

Second, private schools are not required to accept all students. Public dollars should provide funding to schools who will accept any child, not those that can pick and choose which families they want to serve. Families with children with special needs, disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language will not benefit from these tax credits as few private schools can accommodate their needs.

Finally, public schools are critical to the development of healthy communities in our state. Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a

public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools. A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools. In addition, there is a significant risk that some children may not receive adequate education if parents or guardians seek to receive the tax credit and yet provide little or no education in exchange. The lack of accountability for education provided for private or home schools makes this a real risk to Kansas students.

Again, I ask that you vote NO on SB75 for the sake of maintaining strong Kansas public schools, fully funded, accountable and available to all children.

Sincerely,
Melinda Parks, Lenexa, KS

HB 2136 Opposition Testimony (Written Only)
Senate Education Committee
February 5, 2025
Angie Powers, private citizen

Chair Estes and members of the committee,

Thank you for your work representing Kansas voters in Topeka. I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 2136, based on my experiences as a mother of two Kansas public school graduates and as a public school educator for 25 years.

Our public schools are the cornerstone of Kansas communities, operating under rigorous requirements to serve all students, regardless of background, ability, or circumstance. Unlike private schools, public schools do not pick and choose which students or families they serve. House Bill 2136 would divert public funds away from these schools, weakening their ability to deliver on the promise of a quality public school for every Kansas child.

There is no need to expand the Tax Credit Scholarship program at this time because there are still hundreds of thousands of students still eligible under the current guidelines who are not utilizing the scholarship. I respect every family's right to choose the best educational setting for their children, but public funds should not be diverted to subsidize private schools that are not held to the same rules and accountability as public schools. Furthermore, increasing the credit to 100% and expanding the program will leave fewer spots to at-risk students the program was intended to help. Instead, it allows for tax avoidance for those who already choose to send their children to private schools--schools that can pick and choose who they want to educate.

This bill would be especially harmful to rural communities, where private schools are often rare or online only. Public schools are the backbone of these areas, and reallocating funds to private schools in urban and suburban areas would leave rural schools with fewer resources to serve their students' diverse needs.

As a mom and an educator, I've seen the transformative impact of public schools on both my children and my students. Public schools bring students from all walks of life together to learn, grow, and prepare for the future. They work tirelessly to improve and meet the needs of every child.

If House Bill 2136 passes, it will weaken neighborhood public schools. Public funds belong in public schools, which serve all students. I urge you to oppose this bill and instead support policies that strengthen Kansas public schools, like increasing SPED funding.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Angie Powers

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME:Marsha Ratzel

TITLE:Kansas Citizen, retired teacher, grandparent

EMAIL ADDRESS: mratzelster@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:written

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136. Public schools serve every child who walks through the door and that is the power of the United States of America. To take money away from that K12 system is to dilute the power of that system. We also know that the existing Scholarship program is underutilized, so there is no reason to expand it until it is at max capacity. Why fix a problem that doesn't exist?

Expanding a Tax Credit program like this only weakens the public education system that has served our state so well for decades, and I know this firsthand as a middle school math teacher with over 20+ years of in the classroom experience. Our public schools have a long-standing tradition of success, and it's something we should all be proud of.

Private schools get to pick and choose who they serve. Public schools, on the other hand, serve every student that comes, regardless of their abilities or background. This inclusivity is vital to our society, as it ensures that every child has the opportunity to learn and grow.

At risk students are never considered in these bills even though it seems to be its focus. Why? Because it takes specialized education and lots of experience to work with them, which private schools don't possess. That is the power of the K12 systems, whether we are talking about learning disabilities, a child who doesn't speak English as their first language, or someone who has a physical disability. Do you realize what public school delivers? For example, I've had students in my classroom who had feeding tubes, for example. I couldn't do this without the help of the school nurse. In a private school, this child wouldn't be fully integrated in a classroom of peers. Or students who were adopted from Russian orphanages and still working to overcome the trauma of that upbringing. In a private school, this child would have been segregated until they were verbal. Instead, the public school was able to allow them to sit through their "silent period" with the support of a social worker coaching me as the math teacher. They were with their peers which helped them not only learn math, but come out of their shell. Imagine teaching pre-algebra to those students. It took a whole team to help deliver math instruction to them....we did it and they flourish over time.

I am deeply concerned that private schools may not have the necessary resources and staff to adequately meet the needs of the at-risk students the Scholarship program is designed to serve. We have a responsibility to these students, and we cannot afford to let them fall through the cracks.

This bill threatens that kind of help and specialized teaching impossible if you take away resources from the public schools and give it to private schools.

Vote no on bill HB 2136. The only responsible thing to do is to fight to keep the integrity of the public school system strong and viable.

Marsha Ratzel

Prairie Village, Kansas

From: [Phoebe Rinkel](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Cc: [Susan Estes](#)
Subject: Written testimony HB 2136
Date: Monday, February 3, 2025 12:23:22 PM

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Phoebe Rinkel
TITLE: Kansas Parent, Grandparent, Retired Special Educator
EMAIL ADDRESS: phoeberinkel@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only
DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

As a retired Kansas special educator, parent, and grandparent, I am writing to voice strong opposition to bill number HB 2136. This bill would continue the legislative assault on tax dollars for public schools in Kansas by expanding the existing voucher program beyond its original intent, to help low-income (at risk) students who attend under-performing public schools. This bill would only increase the harm to rural students, families, and communities in areas where there are no private school options. This bill would extend vouchers to families with incomes well above the median for Kansas families. It would further erode the tax base funding our public schools, roads and bridges, and more by increasing the donor tax credit to 100%.

Instead of further reducing the tax base for funding public schools, this committee needs to address the critical need for fully funding special education services at the level mandated by law. At the very least, this bill should include accountability to ensure that Kansas children who receive vouchers also receive a quality education, including children with disabilities.

Please reject this bill and any further attempt to expand private school vouchers and tax credits that threaten the quality of our public schools in Kansas.

Phoebe Rinkel, M.S.

Shawnee, Kansas

NAME: Debra J. Schneider

TITLE: Kansas resident, parent, tax payer and educator

EMAIL ADDRESS: debschneider49@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written testimony

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

As a Kansas taxpayer, former full-time Kansas public school teacher, parent of Kansas public school educated children and a current Kansas public school substitute teacher, I am writing to express my FIRM opposition to HB 2136. The thought that my tax dollars, paid by my family's hard work, will go to funding private school vouchers is incomprehensible. The church I attend has a private day school associated with it. I love my church and the day school, however, never sent my children there as the cost was out of reach for us AND we had wonderful public schools in our neighborhood for our children to attend. The parents who send their children to this school can either easily afford to do so OR have chosen to make a private school their priority and made room in their budget for that. I love that we have that choice. To think that I would be asked to help them fund their child's private education is something I hope to never be asked to do. That is their responsibility.

Please vote NO on HB 2135

Debra J. Schneider

4204 W. 91st St.

Prairie Village, KS 66207

public school parent and educator

Sandra Sherry, bsherry1030@gmail.com
Parent in Shawnee Mission School District
HB 2136 Opposition Testimony
House Committee on Education
February 5, 2025

Dear Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB 2136. Here are some of the reasons why I oppose this bill:

- I believe public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers.
- Increasing the tax credit to 100% provides special tax treatment to those who choose to donate through this program that funds private schools versus those who donate to other nonprofits.
- Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children.

As the parent of two children who have benefited from public schools in Kansas, I feel strongly that public tax dollars should only be used for public education that is available to all children.

Please vote no on HB 2136.

Sincerely,

Sandra Beth Sherry
Prairie Village, KS

February 3, 2025

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Joy Smith

TITLE: Parent of students in Shawnee Mission School District, PTA member

EMAIL ADDRESS: jlandgraf2@hotmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

HEARING DATE: February 5, 2025

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written-only

Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Estes & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB 2136.

I am a parent of two students who currently attend our local public elementary school. Our children have flourished in their school. Due to covid restrictions and the fact that I was undergoing treatment for cancer at the time, our daughter entered kindergarten in 2021 with very little preschool and we were concerned she would fall behind. Thanks to fantastic teachers and a supportive environment she has thrived both socially and academically. Our school community is so important to us and has offered great support to us over the years.

Protection of our funding for our public schools is paramount to preserve and maintain the safe and desirable communities that we want to have in Kansas. Public schools are the cornerstones of many communities, particularly those in rural areas, and tax credits of the nature of those proposed will only serve to erode our public education system.

These tax credits ultimately divert tax dollars away from public education and result in less funding for things that have been proven to work to create strong schools. Additionally, this bill could result in private schools and home schools receiving even more tax dollars that are subject to no public oversight. Private schools may employ uncertified teachers and home schools have no curriculum requirements. I can't think of any greater disservice to our community, the state of Kansas, or our country as a whole, than passing a bill such as this which has the potential to further weaken the public school system.

There is no need for expansion of the current program as there are still hundreds of thousands of eligible students under the current guidelines. Additionally, increasing the tax credit to 100% provides special tax treatment versus those who donate to other non-profits and the current tax credit already provides a lucrative benefit to those who choose to fund private schools.

I urge you to please oppose **HB 2136**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joy Smith
Overland Park, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Leslie Smith

TITLE: Kansas Citizen and Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: lesliejsmith05@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

I am a parent of two children who attend public school (Belinder Elementary). My kids have benefited greatly from public school. They have such caring, hard-working teachers and staff who are dedicated to educating all of their students for the betterment of society. They have friends who have special needs and are able to access individualized learning and care due to the funding available. This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a personal choice to receive a religious or other non-public education. Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education.

We are a family that is currently considering a switch to private schools. Still, we believe that is an individual family's choice, and there are scholarships and grants available for families who choose that route. We believe public tax dollars should remain with our public schools which accept and educate all children and provide oversight for our tax dollars.

I urge you to vote no on bill HB 2136. Thank you for your consideration.

Leslie Smith

Prairie Village, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Alison Stephen

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, public school parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: alisonhagman@yahoo.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136. There are still plenty of students under the current guidelines who are eligible for the Tax Credit Scholarship program. There is no need to expand. In fact, expanding the program to private school students will just take limited spots from at-risk students who supposedly were the ones in need.

In 2023, only 1,340 students were participating in the current program, despite 230,000 public school students being eligible. Continuing to expand these programs will only take funding from public schools, which will be especially detrimental to rural schools.

In closing, please vote no on bill HB 2136.

Alison Stephen

Kansas Citizen, Public School Parent & Supporter

Tonganoxie, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Tiffany Stepien

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, Andover High School Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: swrunningmom@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,
I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

I am a graduate of Kansas public schools, I am a parent of a current public school student. I believe public schools have rigorous and appropriate standards of education. My daughter goes to a top 20 ranked school. I do not agree with giving taxpayer money to private schools. I do not endorse shelling out tax funding to un-accredited, un-supervised homeschool rackets or religious co-ops without any oversight. Kansas is currently ranked 19th in education. If this bill only hurts schools and cuts budgets, there is no benefit.

The evidence of school voucher programs in lowest ranking education programs of Oklahoma (ranked 49th!), do not create academic achievement. They do not support special education funding, they do not provide equitable standards or success. Vouchers literally de-fund public schools.

I firmly ask you to vote no on bill HB 2136. It's not good for Kansas students.

Tiffany Stepien, MHCL

Kansas Citizen, Andover High School Parent

swrunningmom@gmail.com

Cynthia Thompson

cindy.thomopson6@gmail.com

HB2136

Opponent

Written Testimony Only

Feb 5, 2025

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee

I am writing in opposition to HB 2136. I am a big proponent of our public schools. Public schools educate ALL children, unlike private schools which can choose their students. I believe any money given to private schools through tax credits not only takes vital resources from public schools but benefits mostly our wealthier citizens, It also allows wealthier families to avoid paying taxes altogether, placing more of the tax burden on other families. The Tax Credit Scholarship Program is welfare for the already wealthy.

Please do not pass this bill.

Thank you

Cynthia Thompson

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO BILL HB2136 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

NAME: JODIE VICKERS: PARENT OF THREE STUDENTS IN SHAWNEE MISSION SCHOOL DISTRICT, LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS OWNER

EMAIL ADDRESS: JODIE.VICKERS@GMAIL.COM

ELECTED OFFICIALS: CHAIR ESTES & MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE,

I APPRECIATE THE YOUR TIME TO HEAR MY OPPOSITION TO
BILL HB2136

I, A CHILD OF A KANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATOR AND ADMINISTRATOR, A STUDENT OF KANSAS SCHOOLS (LSD497) AND A CURRENT PARENT OF STUDENTS IN SMSD SCHOOL DISTRICT, I CAN NOT EXPRESS ENOUGH THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM AND ENSURING EQUALITY TO ALL STUDENTS IN THE STATE OF KANSAS, NOT JUST THE ONES WITH THE PRIVILEGE OF A PRIVATE EDUCATION.

EXPANDING THE THE TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP VOUCHER PROGRAM CAN NOT HAPPEN. THIS WILL FURTHER DIVIDE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL KANSAS CHILDREN AND THE FUTURE OF KANSAS. A FUTURE THAT WILL BE TAKING CARE OF YOU (OR NOT TAKING CAR OF YOU IF YOU DON'T PROPERLY FUND THEIR EDUCATION.)

THE ORIGINAL GOAL OF PROVIDING LOW-INCOME STUDENTS WITH MORE OPPORTUNITIES IS WHERE THIS PROGRAM NEEDS TO STOP.

KANSAS TAX DOLLARS MUST EXCLUSIVELY FUND OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND BILLS WHICH CREATE OPPORTUNITY FOR WEALTHY (AND CORPORATIONS) TO REDUCE THEIR TAX LIABILITY YEAR AFTER YEAR DOES NOT ENHANCE THE SUCCESS OF KANSAS AS A WHOLE.

EDUCATION TAX CREDITS UNDERMINE THE FUNDING, PROMISED TO ALL STUDENTS, PUBLIC SCHOOLS SO DESPERATELY NEED TO STRENGTHEN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

FUND OUR SCHOOLS, FULLY!

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT FUNDS NOT BE DIVERTED TO SUBSIDIZE THE PRIVATE CHOICES OF SOME, PRIVILEGED, PREDOMINANTLY WHITE CITIZENS, WHILE UNDERMINING THE EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITIES OF OTHERS.

ELECTED OFFICIALS VOTING IN SUPPORT OF HB2136 ARE VOTING TO FURTHER UPLIFT THE PRIVILEGED POPULATION, PROMOTING THE REPUBLICAN GOAL OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE STATE OF KANSAS. DISGUSTING!

A BETTER USE OF TAX PAYER FUNDS BY ELECTED OFFICIALS ON THIS COUNCIL IS TO FULLY FUND OUR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS, I HAVE A CHILD WHOM WAS ABANDONED BY THE STATE OF KANSAS BY UNDERFUNDING OF SPECIAL EDUCATION. THIS MUST STOP. SCHOOL DISTRICTS CAN NOT OFFER ALL OF THESE SERVICES ON THEIR OWN.

ELIMINATING FUNDING TO OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS ELIMINATES THE BEST WE CAN GIVE KANSAS, TODAY AND FOR THE FUTURE. WEALTHY FAMILIES WHOM PREFER PRIVATE SCHOOLS ARE ALREADY PROVIDING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THEIR CHILDREN WITHOUT ASSISTANCE FROM TAX PAYERS AT THEIR OWN CHOICE. LEAVE THEM TO THEIR CHOICE AND CONTINUE USING PUBLIC FUNDS

TO FUND PUBLIC CHOICES, NOT THE CHOICES OF THE PRIVILEGED.

ELIMINATING FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS WHILE VOTING TO MOVING FORWARD WITH ANY VOUCHER PROGRAM IS YOU, AS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL VOTING FOR THE DEMISE OF KANSAS EDUCATION, ALL STUDENTS IN THE STATE OF KANSAS AND THE PROGRESS AND SUCCESS OF THE FUTURE OF THE STATE.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LISTENING EARS, I AM HOPEFUL YOU WILL LISTEN TO YOUR CONSTITUENTS AND MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR ALL KANSAS CHILDREN AND VOTE AGAINST ANY CHANGE TO VOUCHERS FOR KANSAS SCHOOLS.

JODIE VICKERS, OVERLAND PARK, KS

NAME: Glenna Walker
TITLE: Kansas Tax Payer
EMAIL ADDRESS: glennaw81@outlook.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only
DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136. Once again we see a bill to take money from public schools and other general fund items and direct it to private institutions. On the surface this bill appears to offer some children the opportunity to attend private schools, where it is assumed they will receive a better quality education. However, in reality this bill is a tax avoidance scheme beneficial to corporations and wealthy individuals. By labeling donations as a tax credit instead of a tax donation, it diverts money from the general fund and public schools at a much higher rate than a donations given to other causes.

In 2023, the last year data was available, only 1,340 of the 230,000 students eligible under the current Tax Credit Scholarship Voucher program participated. We do not know why this is since there is no data or accountability within the program. HB 2136 would expand eligible student to include children of military members and police and fire officers. Personally, I am a veteran of the United States Army and served as a Dodge City Police Officer for ten years. Despite my personal experience I can find no logical reason why children of one career group should receive benefits that another person's children are not eligible for.

Also, I would point out that in my area there is only one accredited private school, which is a Catholic school so not available to non-Catholics. In sixty Kansas counties, there are no accredited private schools. Obviously rural areas would be losing tax dollars to the benefit of more urbanized areas.

Please vote no on HB 2136 and provide confirmation my testimony was received and added to relevant conferee list.

Glenna Walker
Dodge City, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Quinn White

TITLE: KS Citizen and Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: quinnlorrainewhite@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

This bill will strip funds from our public schools and distribute tax dollars unfairly. It is essential that our commitment to free and equal public schools remains a central motivating factor in our decision-making. This will degrade schools for my kids and all the kids in Kansas - especially those in rural areas. It will move tax dollars to entities that are not beholden to the same standards.

Please vote no on bill HB 2136.

Quinn White

Parent and KS Citizen

Shawnee, KS

NAME: Allison Williams
TITLE: Kansas Citizen
EMAIL ADDRESS: allisonwilliams83@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written
DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136. I am a mother of three children in Kansas public schools and also work as a paraprofessional and substitute nurse in the Blue Valley School District. The voucher bill being proposed hurts our public schools and is not available to all children. Public dollars belong to our public schools that accept and educate all children. Diverting our state general funds to private schools undermines public education funding. It also widens the gap between the wealthiest and poorest children in our community. I ask you to vote no on bill HB 2136.

I request confirmation that your testimony has been received and added to the relevant conferee list.

Allison Williams, RN
Leawood, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Sherri Williams

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: mommy22ss@me.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136 as someone who understands the value of our public schools to an educated society and to the vitality of our communities.

I am a product of the public school system and believe that the public schools make us better citizens and build a stronger community. The public school system gives every child a chance to learn and grow and receive an equal education to become thriving and contributing citizens of our communities and state.

I oppose this bill as there is no need for expansion when there are still hundreds of thousands of students still eligible under the current guidelines who are not utilizing scholarships. I also believe that expanding the program to private school students will only take opportunities from the very students the Tax Credit Scholarship program was intended to help. Instead of expanding, accountability should be added to the program to understand why these at-risk students aren't receiving scholarships.

Furthermore, increasing the tax credit to 100% provides special tax treatment to those who choose to donate through this program that funds private schools versus those who donate to other

nonprofits. The current tax credit of 75% already provides a lucrative benefit to those choosing to (and able) to funnel their tax dollars to private schools. Expanding the tax credit to 100% allows these taxpayers, especially the wealthy, to completely avoid paying taxes in the state Kansas. This will divert even more funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas. This program would just essentially be welfare for the wealthy.

Public tax dollars belong with public schools

Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that provide oversight for our tax dollars. We should not be expanding this program that already funnels tax payer dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions.

This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all children and gives it to families who have made a person choice to receive a religious or other non-public education.

Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education.

Private schools are not available to all, private schools get to choose who to accept.

We should not be reducing state revenues by providing tax credits that funnel money to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve.

No oversight or accountability

Our tax dollars should not go to private schools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children. Currently, there are no controls in place to ensure eligible at-risk students who apply for a scholarship are granted one, as private schools are allowed to set their own admission standards. Also, there are no controls in place to ensure those who do receive scholarships receive a quality education. Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars.

Rural communities and students are harmed by voucher programs

Students in rural areas lack little to no private options, therefore rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained.

The Tax Credit Scholarship program primarily benefits those in urban areas of our state. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka.

Please vote no on bill HB 2136.

Sherri Williams
Leavenworth, Kansas

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Erin Woods

TITLE: private citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: ewoods999@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill HB 2136. My reasons are many and I hope you will take the time to consider each of them.

Expansion continues to be unnecessary

The original intent of this program was to help low income (at-risk) kids attending the 100 lowest performing schools. Yet, with each expansion, more and more of the at-risk students get left behind as private schools have a bigger pool of students to choose from. The at-risk kids who would require more resources from private schools can be skipped over in favor of kids with fewer challenges.

There are more than 235,000 free and reduced lunch students eligible for the program and \$6 million in available scholarships. Please put your focus back on these students. Opening the program up to more students and allowing for an increase in the cap is not necessary.

Program lacks data and accountability

Any changes to the Tax Credit Scholarship program should include data collection and reporting requirements to increase accountability and transparency for Kansas tax dollars. Such as:

- Number of students who were eligible and applied for a scholarship vs. number of students utilizing a scholarship. We know private schools are allowed to deny admission for a host of reasons. Were some of these 235,000 at-risk students denied admission?
- Retention rates in the program by income level. Are at-risk students with more challenges returning to public school because they weren't finding success at a private school or because they were counseled out?
- Measures of success for students participating in the program by income level — standardized test scores, graduation rates, post-secondary success. Are we seeing the benefits from this program that were promised? Are there some private schools with lower performance? Should they remain in the program?

Kansans expect their tax dollars to be used effectively. If our tax dollars are being diverted to a private entity, we should expect some oversight and transparency.

100% tax credit is egregious, is tax avoidance, and benefits the wealthy & corporations

Kansans who make contributions to private schools should not receive preferential treatment over Kansans who donate to charitable organizations. The current 75% tax credit (which was expanded from 70%) is lucrative enough. A 100% tax credit allows taxpayers to essentially make donations for free and is pure tax avoidance. Considering the \$500,000 contribution limit (that can be carried forward to future years), the benefits to corporations and wealthy Kansans are immense and an expansion to 100% is egregious.

This increase would just incentivize more taxpayers to contribute to this program resulting in continued decreases to the state general fund that is used to fund our public schools and other public goods like our roads and bridges. All Kansans should be contributing to the good of our state.

Please vote no on HB 2136

This bill is simply a voucher program in disguise and one that is more egregious than most. Not only does it divert public tax dollars to private schools via these lucrative tax credits, but the benefits to wealthy Kansans outweigh the benefits to the students this program was intended to support. Choosing to send your child to a private school shouldn't be subsidized by the state and choosing to donate to a private school should not be subsidized by the state in a manner that is more beneficial than other charitable donations.

Thank you,

Erin Woods
Leawood

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Karen Wycoff

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: kewycoff13@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: WRITTEN

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my testimony. I am opposed to any type of tax credit using public tax dollars for private education. These tax dollars are diverted from public schools to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admission. This is not an effective way to address the educational needs of all of the students in our state. We must educate all to ensure we have a thriving state that attracts the best companies to our state with well educated employees.

I urge you to vote no on bill HB 2136.

Karen Wycoff

Baldwin City

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Julia Young

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: juliakyoung@msn.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

HB 2136 will expand the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program which already exists in Kansas. It diverts public tax dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to deny admission to students for any number of reasons.

While this program was originally intended for low income families at poor performing schools, at 2025 levels, 250% FPL equates to a family of 4 making \$80,375 or a family of 5 making \$94,125. The median income in Kansas is \$69,747.

I remain opposed to voucher programs.

Please vote NO on HB 2136.

Julia Young

Overland Park, Kansas

Testimony to the House Committee on Education
Lynnette Krieger-Zook
Parent/Grandparent USD 259 USD 308 USD 313 USD 266
Retired Public School Special Education Teacher
kriegzook@gmail.com
Bill HB 2136
OPPONENT
WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY
DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

The Tax Credit Scholarship program currently exists. This new proposal significantly increases tax credit for donors to 100% and increases the program cap up from \$10 million to \$20 million, doubling the program cost. This increase is a blatant increase for corporations and wealthy for tax avoidance. This new bill would further erode Kansas tax revenue and place the burden on our middle and lower income taxpayers.

In closing I am asking you to vote NO on bill HB 2136. The current bill provides a tax credit, is designed specifically for family income of 250% of federal poverty level and addresses students who were in low performing public schools to attend a private school. The current bill guidelines still provide for many current students.

Lynnette Krieger-Zook
Buhler, KS
Reno County