

HB 2136 Opposition Testimony
Written Only
Committee
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Retired Teacher, Grandparent and Parent, Shawnee Mission School District 512, Private Citizen

I am writing to ask that you not proceed with action on HB 2136, a measure to further expand the tax credit scholarship to private schools. This bill drains funds from Kansas public school systems, schools which are already experiencing strained budgets as a result of unfunded special education programs.

Special education, which is only provided in limited form in Kansas private schools, is now mandated by Federal statute and will be for the foreseeable future. These programs require careful management of tax funds and strict budgeting in order to ensure these students receive appropriate education and training in order to become contributing members of society.

Private schools have neither the mission nor means to address these requirements. Diverting tax dollars into private school budgets will be a misguided legislative act at the expense of Kansas taxpayers, who are already suffering under inflation and who need strong public school systems.

The economic health of Kansas is the most compelling reason not to expand tax credits. Thriving, well supported public school systems have been shown repeatedly to support local and state-wide economic development and job growth.¹ Public schools are engines of prosperity.² However, research overwhelmingly indicates that taxpayer-funded vouchers have had a pronounced negative effect on student achievement, and student achievement is the basis of a strong local and state economy.ⁱ

Please send confirmation that my testimony been received and added to the relevant conferee list. Thank you for your service to the people of Kansas. I realize that legislative work is often a time consuming, thankless job, and we appreciate your thoughtful approach to the task of supporting Kansas and Kansans.

Sincerely,

Joan T. Gilson, PhD

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¹ "Linking Education Policy to Labor Market Outcomes." (2008) Fasih, Tazeen. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank.

"Public Education Expenditures, Taxation, and Growth: Linking Data to Theory." Blankenau, William F. et al. (May 2007) American Economic Review, pp. 393-397.

² "Pennsylvania's Best Investment: The Social and Economic Benefits of Public Education." Mitra, Dana. Pennsylvania State University.

³ "7 Lessons About School Vouchers From The Privateers Greene, Peter. (Oct 31, 2024) Forbes <https://www.forbes.com/sites/petergreene/2024/10/30/7->

