

HB 2136 Opposition Testimony (Written-Only)

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

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BILL NUMBER: HB 2136

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: [choose one]

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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
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