

**KRIS MEYER**  
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**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