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**IN PERSON PROPONENT ORAL testimony in favor of SB 87 — 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.**

TO: Madam Chair Representative Estes and members of the House Education Committee

FROM: Chuck Weber, Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference

DATE: March 10, 2025

Dear Committee Chair Estes and House Education Committee members,

My name is Chuck Weber, and I serve as the executive director of the Kansas Catholic Conference, where I represent the Catholic Bishops of Kansas in matters of public policy.

Thank you for allowing me to share our support for SB 87.

The Catholic Church teaches that parents are the first and best educators of their children. This does not mean parents must personally educate their child, but it does mean they should be afforded as many options and pathways as possible toward that end. The Low-Income Tax Credit Scholarship program is one resource helping parents access their preferred educational option.

Please let me be clear—the Catholic Church in Kansas supports strong public schools, including fully funded public schools. We do not bring an “us vs. them” mentality to this discussion. But if our collective mission is the best educational environment possible for every child, we must face the reality that it is no longer enough to hope that our friends and colleagues in Kansas’ public school can educate each child equally well, despite their years of dedication.

Today’s children are coming of age in a diverse and dynamic era. They deserve an equally diverse and dynamic educational setting now to give them the best chance of success. High-performing public schools will always be the goal, but trusting families to find the right place for their child is just as important.

Changes to the Low-Income Tax Credit Scholarship program, as laid out in SB 87, which has been amended since this was first heard in this committee last month, will help families better afford this decision.

The citizenship, academic, social, and cultural opportunities provided at Catholic schools are vital to shaping Kansas into the community we want to be.

Please support SB 87, as amended, and help make that happen.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 87. Please let me know if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Weber". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chuck Weber

Executive Director

Kansas Catholic Conference

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