

February 5, 2025

Allison Campbell
Wichita, KS
Ads1113@hotmail.com

WRITTEN PROPONENT TESTIMONY FOR SB 87

Thank you, Senate Education Committee Assistant, Cyndie for accepting my email. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 87, the low-income tax credit student scholarship bill.

My name is Allison Campbell and my two oldest sons currently attend Blessed Sacrament Catholic School while my youngest son currently attends St. Joseph Catholic School. In addition, my daughter will attend school in the Catholic Diocese of Wichita in the future. The low income tax credit scholarship program has significantly helped our school and the other schools in our diocese. We feel this is a topic at hand that our state must expand. Offering young people an education opportunity in our schools has been so highly valued. The changes to this program will be even more appealing. At the end of the day, it is the child that benefits the most.

In conclusion, please support SB 87. With your support, the children in the Wichita Catholic Diocese and other private schools have the opportunity for an education that best suits their needs.

Thank you.

Allison Campbell
Wichita, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Janelle Arnett Campbell

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, parent, school social worker LSCSW

EMAIL ADDRESS: janelleacampbell@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

As a parent of children who graduated from public schools, I believe that public tax dollars should remain within public schools. Public schools are open to ALL children with every need, not those selected by private school guidelines. Instead of using tax credits to fund public schools, the legislature should use the money to fully fund special education.

As a current public school social worker, it's important to me that schools are regulated and non-discriminatory so that all may be included. With a school voucher program, many students may not get into a private school due to socio-economic concerns, religious differences, academic concerns or social / emotional / behavioral challenges. I am not interested in my public school tax money being used in that way.

In closing, I ask you to vote NO on bill SB 87.

Janelle Arnett Campbell, LSCSW
School social worker
Kansas City, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education, S.Education@senate.ks.gov

NAME: Alice J Capson

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: capsonks@aol.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only testimony

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

Public funds should not be used for parochial or private schools. This violates separation of church and state which is guaranteed in the First Amendment to the Constitution (Freedom of Religion and Freedom from religion.) Bills keep coming up in the legislature trying to take funds from the public schools, and there isn't even accountability for those private schools. Our focus should be on fully funding public schools INCLUDING Special Education. Do not vote for any kind of voucher program no matter what language is used. Your focus should be providing full funding for Special Education, not taking funds away, and not redirecting funds to private and parochial schools.

I am a retired public school teacher (SMSD) and firm believer in public education which takes in ALL students (private schools don't) and is essential to democracy and an educated citizenry. Parents who want private education for their children are able to purchase that WITH THEIR OWN funds, but they still need to contribute to public education. ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL BE HURT BY THESE KINDS OF BILLS. Most rural counties don't even have alternatives to public schools, so their schools, already hurting, will lose funds. Johnson County, where I live, seems to have the most private school alternatives, but still should not use public funds for private education. Our excellent public school districts, including Shawnee Mission (where my children attended, K-12) and other districts across the state should not lose important funding. I saw the problems we had with the Brownback tax cuts before things turned around. There were larger class sizes, not enough school counselors and buildings with curtailed cleaning! Don't go backwards!

One of the main reasons I chose to stay and work as a teacher in Kansas were the excellent public schools. Before choosing to move for a job in Kansas, many people will check that their children will get a good public education here. Don't you want to encourage new potential residents by showing that we value public education for all children?

In addition, the current tax credit of 75% already provides a huge benefit to those choosing 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 of Kansas, thus not paying their fair share to educate the next generation.

Please VOTE NO on bill SB 87.

Alice Capson
Kansas Citizen
Overland Park

NAME: Amy Carter
TITLE: Kansas Citizen and Parent
EMAIL ADDRESS: carteam17@yahoo.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Dear Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

As a proud parent of children in the Olathe School District and as someone who understands the value of our public schools to an educated society and to the vitality of our communities, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

It is not clear why we are funneling very LARGE tax credits to wealthy individuals who choose to donate to funding of private schools versus those who donate to other nonprofits. Expanding the already generous tax credit to 100% allows these wealthy taxpayers to completely avoid paying taxes in the state of Kansas.

I can't believe this needs to be stated but 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, and are not held to the same accountability standards as our 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 taxpayer 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.

With all the talk of fiscal responsibility, granting even larger tax credits and breaks to wealthy Kansans does not make sense for the long-term viability of our state's budget and current surplus position. If representatives really want to direct some of the surplus back to their constituents, this targeted tax credit benefiting the wealthiest Kansans certainly does nothing for the majority of Kansans. In fact, rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka.

I urge you to vote no on bill SB 87.

Amy Carter
Concerned Kansan
Overland Park, KS

NAME: Amanda Chappell
TITLE: Kansas Public School Parent & Volunteer
EMAIL ADDRESS: mandichappell@yahoo.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only
DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

It is not the job of the state to provide funding for private schools. The state's job is to provide a high quality public education system that all Kansans have equal access to. If citizens then CHOOSE to not utilize that system which has been offered to them, that is their choice; but it is not the responsibility of the state to compensate them for that choice. We should be leading the nation in public schools, we need to divert MORE money into educating our future leaders, not less.

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. This program already allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors. Expanding the tax credit to 100% is even more egregious.

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 diverts taxpayer dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions. This bill takes public tax dollars that should 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.

Lastly, this bill adversely impacts rural students (and communities) 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 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.

In closing, I ask that you vote no on bill SB 87. Save our public schools, improve our public schools, help us build up Kansas' future leaders and make this a place they want to stay and raise their families.

Best regards,

Amanda Chappell, concerned parent & public school proponent

Prairie Village, Kansas

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Lesa Childers

TITLE: Kansas citizen and parent of two children attending public schools

EMAIL ADDRESS: lgalehodge@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

Thank you in advance for reading my testimony. I am a parent of a child with an IEP enrolled in the Shawnee Mission School District. This bill would divert tax money to private schools that have no requirement to serve students with disabilities. In fact, the vast majority of private schools are not at all equipped to serve students with significant support needs, and they **will** refuse admission to those students. I am a parent of a student with significant support needs. Even if I wanted to take advantage of this program, I would NOT be able to, because there is no school in the state of Kansas that would accept my child. How do I know this? I know this because I am a former private school teacher, and I witnessed how heartbreaking it was to see families have one child accepted to the school, and the other sibling rejected on the basis of disability.

Even if she were allowed, most of those schools are religious schools, specifically Catholic, and I would be a fool to enroll my child, who is already extremely vulnerable to sexual abuse, in any institution that is frankly dangerous for children. A 2023 report released by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation identified 188 clergy in the state “suspected of committing various criminal acts,” including aggravated criminal sodomy, rape, aggravated indecent liberties with a child and aggravated sexual battery. This is during a period going all the way up to 2022. These were crimes that were covered up by the dioceses – a pattern we have seen all over the United states. My child cannot reliably report sexual abuse. I would never, ever put her in this situation.

Our tax dollars should absolutely not be funneled into any religious institution, but especially those that have been proven to be criminally negligent in the protection of children.

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.

Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind.

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.

Please show you care for your most vulnerable constituents by voting no on bill SB 87.

Lesa Childers

Merriam, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Anna Clark

TITLE: Leawood resident

EMAIL ADDRESS: aclark320@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

Please keep public funds in public education. Kansans have always had the choice to send their children to public, private or homeschool. Public schools are open to everyone. However private organizations can refuse anyone for any reason. That would mean Public funds not being used toward the general public with the use of vouchers. It is deceptively called "school choice". When in reality it is the schools that you are allowing to choose their students. I am against this. My tax dollars do not go towards private organizations. Please consider. Thank you for your time.

Anna Clark

Leawood Resident

Opponent Testimony of SB87 For the Senate Education Committee

February 6, 2025

Doloros Clemon

Citizen representing myself

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of Senate Bill 87 on behalf of myself, a concerned citizen.

1. In government, there is separation of church and state. This bill does not maintain that separation.
2. The state has a system of public education already in place and all funding should be in support of the existing system.
3. The legislature cannot and should not impose any religion upon the children residing herein which this bill would allow.
4. The legislature cannot and should not favor any religion over another through funding. A neutral position is all that is proper.
5. The legislature represents all citizens of the state, including agnostic and nonbelievers. This bill does not reflect that position of fair and equitable representation in the appropriation of taxpayer dollars.
6. Private schools are funded by sources other than tax dollars. There is no justification to change that.

Mary Coffman
Private Citizen
Mary Coffman maryo.coffman@icloud.com
SB 87 Opposition Testimony
Opponent
Senate Committee on Education
February 5, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the committee,

Date: February 5, 2025

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 87. I write to express my strong opposition to this proposed legislation, which I believe would severely undermine the public education system in Kansas.

As a retired executive who doesn't have children, I've always been proud to support public schools. I firmly believe that tax dollars should be used to fund public education.

SB 87 would divert critical public tax dollars away from public schools and allocate them to private institutions that lack oversight, accountability, and equitable admissions practices. These tax credits disproportionately benefit wealthier families who already have the means to afford private education while draining essential resources from public schools that serve the majority of Kansas students, including those most in need.

1. Harm to Public Education:

Kansas public schools rely on consistent funding to provide quality education, hire and retain excellent teachers, and maintain infrastructure. Diverting funds to private schools through vouchers would weaken our public schools, leaving vulnerable students with fewer opportunities.

2. Tax Inequity:

The proposed \$8,000 tax credit would create a significant tax windfall for families opting out of public schools. A family with three children could claim \$24,000 in

credits far exceeding typical private school tuition costs. This unfairly uses public dollars to subsidize private education for a small percentage of families, creating an unnecessary financial burden on all taxpayers.

3. Lack of Oversight and Discrimination:

Private schools receiving voucher funds are not held to the same accountability standards as public schools. They are free to deny admission based on factors such as religion, academic performance, or behavior. Public dollars should not support institutions that do not uphold inclusive and equitable access for all students.

4. Long-Term Community Impact:

Redirecting resources to private institutions erodes the collective investment in public education, a cornerstone of our democracy. Strong public schools benefit all Kansans, creating an educated workforce and vibrant communities. Public dollars belong in public schools, not in unregulated private institutions.

SB 87 is not a solution to the challenges facing Kansas education. Instead, it would exacerbate inequities, harm public schools, and misuse taxpayer dollars. I urge you to reject this bill and focus on strengthening public education, which serves every child, regardless of background or income level.

I strongly encourage you to vote No on SB 87.

Thank you for your consideration. I respectfully request that my testimony be added to the record in opposition to SB 87.

Sincerely,

Mary Coffman

Overland Park

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

Name: Rebecca Cohenour

Title: Johnson County resident and parent/grandparent of children in and who graduated from Shawnee Mission USD 512

Email Address: spudgirl80@gmail.com

Bill Number: Bill SB 87

Proponent, Opponent, or Neutral: Opponent

Oral or Written Only Testimony: Written-Only

Date of Hearing: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this issue. I am writing to voice my **opposition** to bill SB 87.

A well-educated public is essential for a successful society. Vouchers take money from public schools and society will suffer as a result.

Following are just a few of the troubling points in this bill (there are many more):

- There is no guarantee that all schools/entities which receive voucher funding provide a solid education for students. Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars!
- Private schools clearly benefit from public dollars but can discriminate in their admission policies.
- Rural areas and families without private school options will pretty much be subsidizing families in more densely populated areas of the state. Their public schools suffer from reduced funding.
- Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program 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 already allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors. 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.

In closing, I urge you to reject SB 87. Public dollars belong in public schools that are accountable to taxpayers. Society as a whole will benefit.

Rebecca Cohenour
Lenexa, Kansas

Written Testimony for SB 87

TO: Madam Chair Senator Erickson and members of the Senate Education Committee

FROM: Cally Dahlstrom

Dear Madam Chair Erickson and committee members,

My name is Cally Dahlstrom and I am the principal at Our Lady of Unity Catholic School. I have had the honor to serve Our Lady of Unity for the past seven years. I have served in Catholic education for the past 19 years. I am sharing my written testimony today to let you know how important SB 87 is to our community and how important it is to continue to expand the tax credit scholarship program.

Our Lady of Unity is a thriving and growing community in part to the benefits of the tax credit scholarship program (SB 87). We have 120 students participating in the tax credit scholarship program this school year, that is 63% of our population. All of our families participate in a scholarship program. All of our students receive free breakfasts and free lunches. 93% of our student body is from a "minority background". The tax credit scholarship provides families the choice to send their students to a small and safe school.

Our Lady of Unity has a student body of 189 students in grades K-8. We pride ourselves on creating an environment where every student matters and every moment counts. Our faculty and staff strive to provide the best learning experience for all of our students. Our small environment allows us to differentiate and provide individualized learning opportunities for all of our students. We have seen students make significant gains in our building in both reading and math through our data driven resource programs. In addition to meeting the academic needs of our students we focus on providing our students with the tools to be excellent citizens of the world. Students participate in service projects, participate in buddy programs, and learn about virtues.

Recently, one of our tax credit scholarship graduates returned to visit our building. I asked him how Our Lady of Unity prepared him for high school and beyond. "John" (not his real name) told me he felt that he was more prepared than many people in his math class. He also told me he was looking forward to mentoring a student from Our Lady of Unity who is about to graduate. "John" knows that without some of the one-on-one support he received from Our Lady of Unity he wouldn't be ready to enter his welding program to prepare for a future career. "John's" visit demonstrates our commitment to every student and every moment. His academic skills and his leadership skills will make him a good citizen and a future leader in our community.

It is very important that we continue to provide opportunities for scholarships to students like "John". SB 87 is giving families choices that they would never be able to afford. 99% of all of our students are likely to graduate from High School. The blessing you are providing with these scholarships will produce good citizens and outstanding leaders for the future of the state of Kansas. I respectfully ask that the committee support SB 87. Thank you for allowing me to share my story for your consideration.

Cally Dahlstrom

Principal

Our Lady of Unity Catholic School

February 5, 2025

Chelsey Dawson
46 Des Moines
South Hutchinson, KS
620-474-0737
chelseyrdawson@gmail.com

WRITTEN PROPONENT TESTIMONY FOR SB 87

Thank you, Senate Education Committee Assistant, Cyndie for accepting my email. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 87, the low-income tax credit student scholarship bill.

My name is Chelsey Dawson and both my son Koen and daughter Aspen attend Holy Cross Catholic school in Hutchinson, KS. The low income tax credit scholarship program has significantly helped our school and the other schools in our diocese. We feel this is a topic at hand that our state must expand. Offering young people an education opportunity in our schools has been so highly valued. The changes to this program will be even more appealing. At the end of the day, it is the child that benefits the most.

In conclusion, please support SB 87. With your support, the children in the Wichita Catholic Diocese and other private schools have the opportunity for an education that best suits their needs.

Thank you.

Chelsey Dawson
Hutchinson, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Molly Dopheide

TITLE: Kansan and parent of Kansas school system graduates

EMAIL ADDRESS: mollydopheide1.8@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136. I fail to see the value of this measure to me as a constituent. It simply moves money from the State to the wealthiest people in Kansas. Despite offering 'scholarships' to the underprivileged, rural, and special needs students private schools have not successfully lured them to their programs. In fact many Kansas counties don't even have private schools. This leaves the most expensive students relying on public education and those of us not taking advantage of the private education responsible for the greater costs.

It is my belief that universal public education is one of the greatest strengths of our country. Its benefits extend beyond my family and its well-being. Everytime I go to shop, a literate person assists me in my purchases, everytime I visit a hospital, literate people care for me, everytime I hear a song or watch a movie, literate people entertain me. This is what a public education system does. Our public education system is the foundation of this. Please don't underfund it any more.

Please vote no on bill HB 2136,

Thank you for your consideration,

Molly Dopheide

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Jennifer Fankhauser

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, parent of 2 school-aged children

EMAIL ADDRESS: jenniferstuartdesign@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

As a parent of a 3rd grader and Pre-K student, I am very concerned about the negative impact this bill would have on our state's public education system. Our tiny town of Madison, KS has only 1 public school. There is no school choice here. We need all of our public resources to be invested into the public schools that serve the community and students in our town and other small, rural Kansas communities like ours.

I urge you to reject bill number SB 87 and instead prioritize funding and policies that support and improve public education. Please stand with our students, teachers, and communities by ensuring that public tax dollars remain dedicated to public schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your commitment to serving our state and hope you will oppose this harmful legislation.

Jennifer Fankhauser

Madison, KS

Ann Fay

Kansan, Mother of 3 Kansas Public School Grads

Kansas Business owner and tax payer

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 87. I am for the continued separation of church and state, which this bill threatens. I do not think with the provisions in the bill, that it will favor the people it was designed for, specifically at-risk, low income kids.

Please vote no on bill SB 87.

Thank you.

Dr. Ann Fay

Prairie village, KS 66207

SB 87

NAME: Ann Fell

TITLE: Kansas citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: ann.fell88@gmail.co,

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only testimony

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

Offering vouchers that Kansas taxpayers will pay for so that families can choose to send their children to private schools is not in the better interests of Kansas, our children, or our future prosperity. Nor is it a good idea to offer large tax credits for our wealthiest citizens to donate for scholarships and avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

Tax dollars from all Kansas taxpayers must be allocated fairly for the benefit of ALL Kansas children, to ensure that every single child has access to a quality education. Tax dollars should never be offered for private use. Our public tax dollars need to fund public schools which are accountable to those of us who pay the taxes.

Most private options exist in higher populated areas and offering vouchers to urban dwellers would unfairly burden those of us in rural areas with very limited school choices to pay for private education of city residents while our public schools suffer.

Tax credits for private education are nothing more than another way for wealthy families who can already afford private school tuition to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

I'm counting on you to end the unfair distribution of Kansas tax dollars for school vouchers by voting no on SB 87.

Ann Fell

Winfield

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Elise Foley

TITLE: SMSD parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: eliseladd@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written testimony

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Dear members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

Public tax dollars belong to public schools that accept and educate ALL children. If parents choose to send their children to private schools or home school or co-op schooling, that's great-that decision is theirs to make, and thus should be on their own dime entirely or by fundraising through that specific system or congregation. Public schools serve the entire community. There is no denial of service. In a single classroom could be a neurodivergent student, a wealthy student, students on free and reduced lunch programs, a middle of the road student, a high achieving or accelerated student, a student on a behaviour plan, a student who needs extra services and ALL of these students are serviced by public school. There is no picking and choosing the best. Everyone gets to come to the table. MOST of those students would not be accepted into a private school, or parochial school not only because of cost, but because most religious institutions and private schools do not have the resources needed to acceptably educate all students. If the student fails- at academics, at "behaviour", and anything deemed inexcusable, they kick them out. Not to mention the severe lack of oversight of the distribution of funds.

I was a teacher in a private school for a decade, I have a first hand account of this happening and frequently. Why are we even considering taking away funds from our public schools who accept and work with all students, meeting them where they are? It is absurd to me that we finally have a fully funded public school district and yet people are trying to hinder that.

I grew up going to public schools here in our community (Blue Valley) and my education was top tier. Any "pitfalls" in regards to religion or familial beliefs, etc. were mitigated at home (which I believe and have noticed has been the largest argument against public

school) as they should be. My parents, like I do with my own children, took a strong engagement in my education because education doesn't just stop at school. Some, most, children don't get a support system like I had and that my children receive. They rely on their school for safety, security, a place to feel included, a place they can explore and learn and be exposed to all sorts of agreement and disagreement. Like minded individuals and completely different thinking individuals. Though any and all of those individuals are welcome. Don't take away from those kids- my kids.

In closing, I implore you to vote no on bill SB 87. It would be a major disservice to our children and their future and the future of our community. Please consider every single child in our community's care, not just the "best" ones. Vote no.

Elise Foley
Overland Park

NAME: Sherry Giebler

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, EdS, LPC

EMAIL ADDRESS: sherry.giebler@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my deep opposition to SB 87.

With 32 years of experience as a Kansas public school teacher, counselor, and adjunct professor, I have dedicated my life to serving students and families across our state. I have seen firsthand the power of a strong public education system—how it opens doors, lifts communities, and gives every child, regardless of background or income, a chance to succeed. Public education is the foundation of our state’s future, and our children deserve our full investment, free from political division.

I do not support vouchers or Tax Credit Scholarships because they siphon public tax dollars away from public schools—schools that welcome and educate every child. These programs lack oversight and accountability, and they disproportionately benefit a select few at the expense of the broader student population. Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will further drain critical resources from our public schools, while also allowing donors to avoid contributing their fair share of taxes to Kansas. This bill redirects money that could strengthen our public schools—schools that serve all children—into private institutions that can pick and choose their students.

As an educator, I have personally witnessed families enroll their children in private schools, only to return to public schools within weeks when they realize that private institutions are not always equipped to meet their needs. Unlike public schools, private schools do not have to follow the same accountability and transparency standards. Public schools are held to rigorous state regulations, ensuring that students receive a quality education and that taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly. Private schools, however, operate by different rules, and the public has no way of knowing whether their tax dollars are truly benefiting Kansas children.

This bill also fails to consider our rural communities. Having taught in Western Kansas, I know firsthand that rural taxpayers will ultimately be subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas like Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka. Instead of investing in education systems that benefit all Kansas children, this bill diverts funding toward private choices—choices that should not come at the cost of our public schools and the students they serve.

I urge you to stand with Kansas families and public schools. Please vote NO on SB 87.

Sherry Giebler, EdS, LPC

Olathe, KS

Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Attachment 73

NAME: Danielle George
TITLE: Parent in USD 230
EMAIL ADDRESS: dvoorhees24@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

I am a parent in USD 230 with a 1st grader in public school. We moved to our area specifically for the school and the community within the school district because we felt it would be the best fit for our child. Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind. Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program to private school students leaves fewer spots for the at-risk students the program was intended to help, which would include my child who utilizes several programs not offered through private education. 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. Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education. Rural students and communities, which includes the vast majority of Kansas students, are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.

In closing I urge you to vote no on SB 87 to keep education equitable for all Kansas children.

Danielle George

Spring Hill KS

SB 87 Opposition Testimony
Written Only
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
S.Education@senate.ks.gov

Joan T. Gilson, PhD Writerslife2012@gmail.com

Retired Teacher, Grandparent and Parent, Shawnee Mission School District 512, Private Citizen

I am writing to ask that you not proceed with action on SB 87, 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.³

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

13850 W. 91st Ter. Apt. 512D

Lenexa, KS 66215

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

² "Public Education Expenditures, Taxation, and Growth: Linking Data to Theory." Blankenau, William F. et al. (May 2007) American Economic Review, pp. 393-397.

³ "Pennsylvania's Best Investment: The Social and Economic Benefits of Public Education." Mitra, Dana. Pennsylvania State University.

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

John Glavin

Kansas Citizen, parent of a SMSD elementary children

glavinjohn138@gmail.com

Bill SB 87

OPPONENT

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Dear members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. I am writing to you as a parent of public school child with two more about to begin and a graduate of the same school system. I am someone who understands the value of our public schools to an educated society and to the vitality of our communities. The Shawnee Mission schools Brookridge elementary, Nall Hills elementary, Indian Woods middle school, and Shawnee Mission South have all been impactful and paramount to my family.

I oppose this bill. 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 make other charitable donations. Expanding the tax credit to 100% allows these taxpayers, especially the wealthy, to completely avoid paying taxes in the state of Kansas. This will negate the original intent to benefit the wealthy. The program already allows for tax avoidance and that would only become more egregious through this bill.

This bill takes public tax dollars 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. The public tax dollars should remain in the public schools! Private schools get to choose who attends and lack oversight. We should not be reducing state revenues by providing tax credits that divert taxes owed to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want.

Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education. To those with the most need and at most at risk with out!

Please vote no on bill SB 87

John Glavin

Overland Park

Senate Education Committee

February 6, 2025

Attachment 74

NAME: Krista Gordon
TITLE: Kansas citizen, parent, certified teacher, school employee
EMAIL ADDRESS: kristag71@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only testimony
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

Good day and thank you for your public service to the state of Kansas. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

I oppose SB 87 for many reasons, but I am sharing my top three today:

1. **Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education in order to subsidize the private choices of some parents and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas.** Living in the Kansas City area, we know that most of the elite private schools are in Missouri. Sending kids across the state line drains Kansas schools of money and talent. Public schools work for most families. I am a parent of three children, two that have graduated to attend rigorous college programs. Both graduates were AP scholars and one was National Merit Scholar. My current Blue Valley student will also graduate well prepared and with honors. The well-funded educational programs, including special education services, which my children have benefitted from, helped set them and thousands more up for success.
2. **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.** Private schools are not available to all; they get to choose who to accept. 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 or will accommodate their needs. As a former special education teacher, I understand the importance of providing a great education to children and families with special needs. Special education programs are critical to success and if provided early on can mitigate costs for the state down the road by helping students maximize their potential in their public schools which are accessible to all.
3. **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.** I have reviewed some of the watered down homeschool curriculums. I have experience with subpar parochial schools (I attended one myself.) If Kansas wants well prepared and educated citizens, we must hold schools to high, measurable standards. Kansas currently

ranks around the middle nationwide for education outcomes- with some districts faring better than others. We can do better with continued investment in our public schools. There are multiple studies of Arizona's failed voucher program- citing poor outcomes and low accountability. Examine how our neighbors Oklahoma and Arkansas have done by reducing funding and focusing on the wrong public education priorities. They have also moved to the bottom in ranks. **A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students.**

Please consider investing in our public schools and building a strong and educated community by opposing SB87.

Krista Gordon

Leawood, Kansas

NAME: Krista Gordon
TITLE: Kansas citizen, parent, certified teacher, school employee
EMAIL ADDRESS: kristag71@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only testimony
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ranks around the middle nationwide for education outcomes- with some districts faring better than others. We can do better with continued investment in our public schools. There are multiple studies of Arizona's failed voucher program- citing poor outcomes and low accountability. Examine how our neighbors Oklahoma and Arkansas have done by reducing funding and focusing on the wrong public education priorities. They have also moved to the bottom in ranks. **A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students.**

Please consider investing in our public schools and building a strong and educated community by opposing SB87.

Krista Gordon

Leawood, Kansas

Opponent (written-only) of SB 87
Expansion of Tax Credit Scholarship Program

for the Senate Education Committee
Hearing Date: February 6, 2024
Erin Gould

Resident of Roeland Park, Kansas and parent of public school graduates

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee;

I am a Kansas resident and proud parent of three public school graduates. I am writing today because I believe this committee should stay focused on ensuring that Kansas public schools – which must welcome and serve every Kansas child – remain the focus of this committee. I am opposed to this bill and any other that seeks to harm children and financially undermine public schools as this one does.

There Is Harm

Fiscal Harm

There are some who say that because this program doesn't take money *directly* away from the General Fund or because it is money that the state *never received* in the first place it is somehow not taking money away from the state so there is no fiscal harm. This is a particularly cynical and self-serving view which deliberately ignores the fact that tax credits are a significant reduction in a tax bill and therefore a significant reduction in state revenue that would otherwise be received and spent on public education and other services.

Harm to Children

Voucher programs encourage the dismantling of public education by bribing Kansans with tax relief to remove their children from public schools and place them in private schools. Our Kansas public schools are publicly accountable and have layers of oversight to ensure children are safe and that they receive a fact-based, dogma-free, quality education. Private schools in Kansas, on the other hand

- are not subject to public oversight
- can have bigoted and discriminatory selection processes
- can teach objectively false information
- may promote religious dogma
- may be staffed by unqualified persons.

Allowing millions in tax dollars to evaporate by offering tax credits to families for private school choices without any mechanism to ensure the selected private educations meet minimum state standards for curricula, educational progress, and safety is a dereliction of this committee's obligation to protect Kansas children and ensure all Kansas children receive a quality education.

Where Does the Costly Program End?

It strikes me that this year's version of the bill is larger than previous years' both in the credit percentage and the number of children eligible to participate. How big will we let this program get? This year's version increases the cap, increases the tax credit percentage to 100% and includes more categories of applicants. It is clear that growing the program is the plan, not solving a specific education problem. The more kids that qualify, the easier it is to justify raising the cap. While \$20 million may seem an expendable amount today, what is to keep the legislature from raising the cap to \$50 million or \$500 million? What happens when the cost of this second, poorly regulated, education funding mechanism becomes a financial burden to the state? Will you cut the program or will you attack public education costs and strip even more

from our public schools? Why do you want to create two competing education systems that results in both a funding and quality crisis? Arizona is a perfect example of how this will end – ballooning education costs, poorer educational outcomes, angry citizens.

Public schools are one of Kansas' strengths. If this committee sees room for improvement in Kansas public schools, then please work to make those improvements so all Kansas children can benefit and thrive. Do not continue this effort to strip schools of children and resources. Families wanting an educational experience outside the public schools should always have that option to do so. However, I urge you to remember **it is not the obligation of the state to fund or financially reward private choices** made in lieu of public services and to **vote NO on this bill**.

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Kimberly Groom

TITLE: Thirty-seven-year Kansas Educator; BS in Business; BS in Elementary Education; Masters in Curriculum and Instruction; Parent; Grandparent; Great-Grandparent

EMAIL ADDRESS: kjgroom0917@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

For the past thirty-seven years, I have had the privilege to serve the children of USD #465 in Winfield, Kansas. I have taught kindergarten through 8th grade. My classrooms have included combination classrooms, looping classrooms, self-contained classrooms, block schedules, and traditional schedules. I cannot even begin to list the various teaching strategies I have employed, refined, and, occasionally, abandoned throughout three and a half decades. One thing has remained constant though, my kiddos do not come to me on a level playing field. Many factors contribute to this, generational wealth, educational opportunities, family expectations, physical and mental health challenges, the death of a parent or sibling, the list is endless. In recent years these have come to be referred to as ACES or Adverse Childhood Experiences. One of my jobs is to help these children from diverse backgrounds learn to respect each other's experiences, discover each other's strengths, and learn to work together. Employers list having employees who can work together to solve problems as one of their top priorities. SB 87 is the antithesis of this concept. It provides tax breaks for corporations and/or individuals at the expense of children who do not have the same advantages. It will widen the gap between children who benefit from wealth and those who, through no fault of their own, are being raised in much less prosperous conditions. It will take money from their schools, making it that much harder to close that gap, to build a cohesive workforce. This will particularly hurt our students in rural communities. Rural communities that have been the backbone of our state. This is not who Kansans are. I refuse to believe that we are a state that would pass a law that so blatantly discriminates against our most vulnerable children. This week my students and

Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Attachment 87

I celebrated Kansas' birthday. We spoke these words, words echoed by Kansans for over a century- "To the stars through difficulties." Please vote no. Please allow ALL of our children to have the resources necessary to reach those stars.

Kimberly Groom

Rock, Kansas 67131



KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Opponent Testimony of SB 87 – Written Only

For the Senate Education Committee

February 6, 2025

Timothy R. Graham

Director of Government Relations & Legislative Affairs

Chairperson Erickson, members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 87.

Kansas NEA is a member-driven organization that represents all 40,000 educators in the state of Kansas. We have nearly 22,000 members. The positions we advocate for have been proposed, debated, and adopted by several hundred members that were selected by their peers to attend our annual Representative Assembly.

Our members have a strong stance on vouchers that is quite clear. The first part of that resolution reads:

Kansas NEA believes that voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or funding formulas that have the effect of financing private education with public funds, undermine support for public schools. Such programs could lead to racial, economic, and social isolation of students and weaken or destroy the public school system.

The Low-Income Student Scholarship Program is a voucher program that diverts public funds to private schools.

The KNEA resolution on vouchers continues to state:

KNEA acknowledges that it is the right of parents/guardians to choose to send their students to private schools...

...KNEA further believes that any private school or agency that receives public funding through voucher plans, tax credits, or other funding/financial arrangements must be subject to all accountability measures and regulations required of public schools.

SB 87 does not ensure that private schools that receive public funds are held to the same standards as public schools. As a matter of fact, SB 87 doesn't require any language regarding accountability, measurement, licensure, accreditation, assessment, or service requirements. The omission of such language is another reason that KNEA opposes this bill.

In closing, the most painful part for teachers when talking about such bills is the rhetoric seems to follow them. These proposals always appear to be predicated upon the assumption that public schools and, in turn, public school teachers are not thriving to meet the needs of Kansas children. This is not the case.

We ask the committee to oppose SB 87.