

February 4, 2025

Celia Hageman

700 Laramie Circle

Maize, KS 67101

celiahageman@yahoo.com 316-390-4321

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 Celia Hageman and I have 2 sons and 1 daughter that attend St. Francis of Assis and Bishop Carroll, both Catholic schools. I also teach at St. Joseph Catholic School. The low income tax credit scholarship program has significantly helped our schools and the other schools in our diocese. We highly value having a diverse population in our schools and as we teach our children about social justice, we feel this is a topic at hand that our state must expand.

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,

Celia Hageman

Wichita, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Lynn Graves Hardy

TITLE: Kansas Citizen for 40+ years and parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: LynnGHardy@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.

First, I want to thank you for your service and dedication to Kansas and your diligence in considering what is best for our GREAT STATE.

I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 87. In considering this Bill, I want to express my dissatisfaction because I have a daughter who grew up in KS schools and now serves at a Professor at the University of Texas in the School of Social Work. My daughter and SO MANY THOUSANDS of other young adults have had so much success in life BASED ON their experience in the PUBLIC School System in KS. When I moved to Kansas City from Texas in 1983, I specifically chose to live on the Kansas side of the state line BECAUSE of the schools. My daughter received, I believe, a BETTER, more well-rounded education because she went to PUBLIC SCHOOL.

In KS, we do not have mountains, oceans or year-round warm weather to draw people to our state. What we do have is EXCELLENT PUBLIC EDUCATION. PLEASE do not pass Bill SB87. It will put our state in jeopardy in more than one way in the future!

Public tax dollars belong with public schools:

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate **all** children and that are **accountable to taxpayers**.
- Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program.
- 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 private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice

- Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans who choose not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education that is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

Private schools are not available to all, private schools get to choose who to accept

- We should not reduce state revenues by providing funding for families to funnel that money to **private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve.**
- 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 accommodate their needs.
- **Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind. Vouchers like this tax credit program do not provide real choice.**

Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy

- Families who can already afford the choice to send their kids to private school will benefit greatly, while funding for public schools and other state services pay the price.
- Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share.

Public schools are a public good:

- For many benefiting from these tax credits, especially those with multiple kids, they will receive **annual refunds** and will contribute nothing towards the public goods in our state that all Kansans benefit from.
- **Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools.**
- **A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society**, not just the individual students. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system.

No oversight or accountability:

- **Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools 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 those receiving these tax credits are providing the children with a quality education or any education at all. Kansans expect accountability for how our tax dollars are being used.

Impact on rural areas:

- **Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.**
- These tax credits will primarily benefit 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.
- **Will we eventually just CLOSE our rural schools AND COMMUNITIES???**

For so MANY reasons...we must maintain our AMAZING KANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS! If not for our present-day children, for the future of our GREAT STATE! PLEASE, I implore you to consider all this information before casting a vote for SB87. And VOTE NO.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lynn Hardy

Kansas Citizen for 40+ years

Leawood, KS

NAME: Marcel Harmon

TITLE: Private Citizen and former School Board Member / President (USD 497)

EMAIL ADDRESS: marcelharmon@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to share my opponent testimony against SB 87. My name is Marcel Harmon, and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on SB 87.

Both of my kids attended public school (USD 497) with the youngest graduating high school in 2023. I'm a former school board member of USD 497. I have volunteered on local and state education committees and tasks forces for a large portion of my adult life, and as a consultant have spent a significant amount of time in public schools for most of my professional career. My parents were both public school teachers (my mom was also a grade school librarian). I know the value of public education to the state of Kansas and its importance to the vitality of our communities.

I have grouped my opposition points into the following topics.

Expansion of the Tax Credit Scholarship Program:

- Why does the program need to be expanded when there are still hundreds of thousands of students still eligible under the current guidelines who are not utilizing scholarships?
- 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.*

- Increasing the tax credit to 100%, by providing special tax treatment to the donors of this program, provides a greater incentive to funding private schools versus donating to other very worthy nonprofits. They should all be on an equal playing field relative to tax incentives.
- The current tax credit of 75% already is already 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.*

Public tax dollars belong with public schools:

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools primarily because a) they accept and educate ALL children (private schools can pick and choose which children they want to serve) and b) they are accountable to the taxpayers. Accountability is a critical part of spending public dollars, as many conservative legislators are fond of pointing out. Private and homeschools lack the oversight necessary to confirm whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children.
- Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship Program will divert even more funds from public education to subsidize private education, have the same negative impact as a voucher program. This diversion of funds harms public education along with the students served by public schools. This can be particularly harmful for our rural communities as their resources are drained, with little to no private options available. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for urban families.
- Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans who choose not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education (currently underfunded by \$173 million).
- Families with children with special needs, disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language will not benefit from this tax credit expansion as few private schools can accommodate their needs. And taking money away from public schools will make it harder for them to adequately meet the needs of these families and their students. This is extremely inequitable, negatively impacting many of those already struggling the most.

Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy:

- Vouchers, tax credit scholarships, etc., take money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice. This program already allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors. Expanding the tax credit to 100% is even more egregious. *The Tax Credit Scholarship program, like most voucher programs, is welfare for the wealthy.*

Public schools are a public good:

- A strong public education system benefits ALL of society, not just the individual students who make use of it. This is because public schools are a public service – a common pool resource – providing good quality education to EVERYONE, regardless of socio-economic status. A strong public education system ensures we have citizenry capable of maintaining our communities and society as a whole. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system and putting this critical common pool resource at risk.
- Each successive generation can also be viewed as a common pool resource because the continuity, success, and vitality of our communities, economies, and institutions depends on the success of each generation of students and our ability to educate and prepare them for the world. Because private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind in the process, they take away from that common pool resource society depends on.

Relevant Sources of Information

The following are some relevant sources of information:

- State and local experience proves school vouchers are a failed policy that must be opposed: <https://www.epi.org/blog/state-and-local-experience-proves-school-vouchers-are-a-failed-policy-that-must-be-opposed-as-voucher-expansion-bills-gain-momentum-look-to-public-school-advocates-for-guidance/>

- State Policymakers Should Reject K-12 School Voucher Plans:
<https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/state-policymakers-should-reject-k-12-school-voucher-plans>
- School Vouchers: A Survey of the Economics Literature:
<https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jel.20150679>
- Summary of Research on School Vouchers:
<https://education.indiana.edu/research/centers/ceep/education-policy/policy-briefs/2023/research-on-school-vouchers.html>
- Public dollars should fund public schools (from the National Coalition for Public Education): <https://www.ncpecoalition.org/>
- Private School Choice: What the Research Says: <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/private-school-choice-what-the-research-says/2024/10>

Once again, I thank you all for reviewing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no on the passage of SB 87 out of committee.

Amy Hartman
Lifelong Kansas citizen, mom, elementary reading Para
amyhartmantwins@gmail.com
Bill SB 87
Opponent
WRITTEN TESTIMONY
February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

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

I am a lifelong Kansan and an educator. I currently work as a Para in the reading support classroom, at a local elementary. I help many students learn to read who need extra support. I believe we need to support all children. At my school there are other children who need reading support, but we simply do not have enough resources. Please vote no on bill SB 87.

Please vote no on bill SB 87

Thank you for your time,
Amy Hartman
Overland Park

NAME: Ronda Hassig
TITLE: Kansas Citizen, Retired teacher
EMAIL ADDRESS: rondahassig@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 Honorable Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to **Senate bill #SB87**. The very power of our United States and all of our citizens is public education. The Founding fathers intended it that way and it has worked just fine for almost 250 years, and especially in Kansas public schools! Public schools serve **every** child who comes through the doors, regardless! I am a proud graduate of Kansas public schools – Lawrence High School, University of Kansas BSE, Kansas State MSE (2), and National Board Certification (2). Each of my nieces, nephews, and grand nieces and nephews are Kansas public educated and proud of it. I have three nurses and one ROTC graduates from Washburn University who is now a Lt. Colonel in the U.S. Army! My brother is the DA in Cole Camp, Missouri! To take money away from the K-12 system that educated myself and all my family, and still succeeds to this day is to weaken its power. We also know that the Scholarship program is underutilized right now so there is no reason to expand it until it reaches its maximum capacity. Why fix a problem that doesn't exist?

It's also important to remember, that my husband I have no children, but combined, we taught close to 80 years in the Kansas public schools. Our tax dollars, for over 46 years, have gone to educate our Kansas youth in public schools and we had no children participating in that system. Our tax dollars should not be going to private schools. I know what's being taught in public schools. I can go online and look every day at their curriculums K-12. I also know that every child that needs extra help is going to get that help! You can't guarantee that will happen in any private school.

Expanding a Tax Credit program like this weakens the public education system that has served our state so well for over a hundred years. I know this firsthand as a Kansas public high school social studies teacher and middle school library media teacher with over 35+ years of in-the-classroom experience. Our public schools have a long-standing tradition of success, with many of our students going on to excel in college and other careers. Look at my very own family. This is a testament to the quality of education our public schools provide. I'm proud of Kansas public schools, and you should be too.

Private schools can choose who they serve. Public schools, however, serve every student, regardless of their abilities, background, or income. This inclusivity is vital to our society, as it ensures that every child has the opportunity to learn and grow – it is their right!

Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Attachment 

These bills never consider at-risk kids, even though it seems to focus on special students it truly doesn't. The language sounds good, but I was in the classroom too long to believe it. Why? Because it takes specialized education and lots of experience for teachers to work with special students. Private schools don't possess these same abilities. Instead, if a private school has a special student that they can't provide services for they more than likely send them to a public school. Again, this is what makes our K-12 system so good, whether we are talking about learning or physical disabilities or students who can't speak English as a first language. It is the government's responsibility to make these services available to **every student**. It takes a team of educators to educate every child and private schools do not have the ability to do that.

Senate Bill #87 threatens the kind of help and specialized teaching that is impossible if you take away resources from the public schools and give them to private schools. If the bill is passed, the negative impact on public school resources, including staff and facilities is so serious that it cannot be overlooked, as a representative of the citizens of Kansas

Vote NO on SB87. The only responsible thing to do is to fight to keep the integrity of the public school system strong and viable. You need to take a long hard look at the long-term implications of this bill. As a tax payer and former Kansas Master teacher, please don't cheat my great, great nieces and nephews or the children of my former students who I still know and love, from the same excellent Kansas public education that I had and that their own parents had.

Ronda Hassig
Fort Scott, Kansas

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Francine Haverkamp
TITLE: Kansas Citizen, Parent
EMAIL ADDRESS: francihaverkamp@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.

I grew up attending rural Kansas public schools. I taught for twenty years, four in private schools and sixteen in public. I have nine children who have attended public schools and private schools. In my experience, public schools were more beneficial for my children as well as for my students. I found that in the public schools, students are exposed to a wider range of abilities and experiences with all socio-economic classes as well as ethnicities than in the private schools. This added to their compassion, empathy, and overall understanding of others that is real in content and action as they learned from a young age to graduation through exposure, example, and set boundaries.

I believe that all of our funding resources should go to public schools that do not discriminate nor restrict enrollment due to disability. Private schools do not provide enough services for disabled students even if they are on an IEP. The more severe the disability, the more likely the private school will divert the student to the public school system.

Private schools are not even an option in the majority of our state's counties. In our county of several hundred square miles, there are only two, and they are held to different accountability standards than the public schools and therefore non-comparable.

I believe this scheme to siphon away tax dollars from public schools to private schools lacks merit in all of the important metrics and is simply a way for many to steer their money into a black hole of unaccountability while not contributing to the common good of ALL Kansans.

Please vote no on SB 87.

Sincerely,

Francine Haverkamp
Concerned Kansas Citizen
Bern, KS
Sent from my iPhone

NAME: Stephanie Heckart

TITLE: Kansas Citizen & Parent of Blue Valley Students

EMAIL ADDRESS: stephanieheckart@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.

As a parent in the public school system, I know that 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. Additionally, 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.

I ask you to vote no on SB 87.

Stephanie Heckart

Overland Park, KS

NAME: Jory Hennelly
TITLE: Kansas Citizen
EMAIL ADDRESS: jorylmick@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.

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.

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.

Please vote no on SB 87.

Jory Hennelly
Shawnee

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Amy Hill

TITLE: Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: amykfrost@yahoo.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written 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 tax dollars belong with our public schools supporting all kids in Kansas. 90% of kids in Kansas attend public schools. The lack of oversight around admission practices to private schools and their lack of accountability for education outcomes seems like tax dollars are being paid by all for the benefit of some.

Public schools are expected to meet the needs of all kids in Kansas and public school teachers are doing that. I have three children in Blue Valley schools and they all learn differently and have needed different support and have received that from their teachers. This is why we need to invest in our public schools and not divert funds to private schools.

Studies have shown that students who attend private schools through vouchers do not perform better academically than students who attend public schools. Vouchers also may perpetuate educational inequality. They can benefit more affluent families who are more likely to have the resources to navigate the application process. Parents can choose to send their child to the school of their choice, but public tax dollars should not be used to support private schools.

Kansas legislators should focus their efforts on strengthening our public school system and not diverting tax dollars to private schools. There is a real opportunity for you to choose to fully fund Special Education which would benefit all students.


Kansas has some of the highest education standards in the nation and outstanding teachers who are challenging our kids with classroom learning that encourages critical thinking and hands on learning. These teachers deserve the commitment and support of our representatives. Your efforts should be to support these teachers and making sure we can continue to hire and keep good teachers for children in public schools. If you pass this bill, you will be putting the funding needed to support our teachers and the majority of Kansas kids at risk by giving tax dollars to schools that don't have the same obligations and have no oversight.

I oppose bill SB 87.

Thank you for your consideration.

Amy Hill

Parent of three children in Blue Valley District
Olathe, KS

Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Attachment 9 

SB 87 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
February 3, 2025

NAME: Amy Hinrichs

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: aloramy.hinrichs@yahoo.com

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 believe the importance of providing all children with an education is vital to the success of this country and to democracy. Democracy is a government determined by its people. For the voters to guide and direct our country, all children need to have access to a quality education. "American public education is one of the two foundational elements of our democracy. The other is the ballot itself," says Derek W. Black, a professor at the University of South Carolina School of Law. According to the Christian Science Monitor, "...study after study has shown that the more education people have, the more they vote, and the more they participate in a nation's political life." By redirecting funds from public schools to private schools, you are undermining public education and therefore the foundation of our democracy.

Public schools also teach democracy by bringing diverse people together in a shared space with the common goal of learning. Private schools, on the other hand, have the choice of taking a student or not. This often leaves out lower income, disabled, special needs, and those students for whom English isn't their first language.

Furthermore, our tax dollars should not go to private institutions without government oversight and accountability.

Again, I ask you to vote no on bill SB 87.

Amy Hinrichs
Olathe, KS



**SB 87 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Ron Hobert
rhobert@aftks.org
President, AFT Kansas**

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 87.

While the new language in the bill regarding eligibility criteria certainly includes some laudable populations, the fact remains, as with similar bills already heard by this committee, SB 87 will siphon funding from public education. So allow me to reiterate some relevant points.

There is research to support the claim in Arizona and Florida that vouchers are not only disastrous for the educational system, but also very costly to the state budgets and also violate religious freedom. As a 35-year educator and the state president of American Federation of Teachers Kansas, I firmly believe public dollars belong with public schools because education is a fundamental right, not a privilege for the wealthy.

In recent years, a push to divert public dollars to private schools has intensified across the country through vouchers, K-12 "savings accounts," and tax credits. There are insidious schemes that provide lucrative tax credits for donors that fund scholarships to private schools. In Kansas, vouchers do not support our rural schools. Many times the school of a small community is the center of all activity and could be the largest employer of the county.

A free public education for all is perhaps the singular defining virtue of our American society, and vouchers pose a real threat, not just to the soul of public education, but to the very existence of public education itself. American public education is the

Kansas Association of Public Employees/AFT-Kansas
1300 SW Topeka Blvd., Topeka, KS 66612
785-235-0262 • Fax 785-235-3920 • Toll Free 800-232-527
ks.aft.org • info@aftks.org

Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Attachment 91

foundation of our democracy where all children are accepted, regardless of their gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, disability or economic status.

1. Voucher Cost Private School Voucher Costs Are Out of Control — National Coalition for Public Education (NCPE)
2. Religious Freedom Violate Religious Freedom — National Coalition for Public Education (NCPE)
3. Rural America Don't Work in Rural Areas — National Coalition for Public Education (NCPE)

I have mentioned a few of the many reasons why a voucher, tax credit or an education savings account would hurt for Kansas public schools, the Kansas taxpayer, and state revenues. There are far too many states experiencing the negative effects of a voucher programs. Just to the north of us, Nebraska voters overwhelmingly said “NO!” to a state voucher system.

SB 87 is simply wrong for Kansas. It's wrong for our Kansas students and it's wrong for our Kansas communities. AFT Kansas stands in strong opposition to any type of voucher movement and respectfully requests this bill not be advanced. Thank you.

Ron Hobert
AFT Kansas, President

NAME: Rebecca Hoge

TITLE: Kansas citizen and parent of 2 children in public school

EMAIL ADDRESS: bechoge@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 Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my STRONG opposition to bill number SB 87. I am a graduate of the Shawnee Mission School District, taught for 10 years in the SMSD, and now have two children attending school in the Olathe School District. I am also a substitute for the Olathe School District. Public education is something I am passionate about. Public education is the right of every American child and public tax dollars belong in public schools. Public schools accept and educate ALL students. This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids in our communities and gives it to families who have made a personal choice to receive a religious education or other private education. Tax credits should not be given to fund private schools, those schools should be funded by their members' tuition fees alone. The legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education. Many private schools do not accept, or can not provide, proper education for special needs students, and therefore should NOT receive public education dollars. Our public schools need smaller class sizes, they need to retain qualified teachers for elementary, middle and high school levels. Our public schools need education materials to meet the needs of ALL students. If we take away funding for public schools though larger tax credits for private schools, Kansas schools and Kansas children will suffer the consequences. Let the wealthy fund their own education if they so choose, but do NOT take away funds from the working class, lower income and at-risk children. My family is privileged and could afford a private education, but I will always choose and fight for public education. It is a basic right of the children in America. If our educational systems fail due to lack of funding, then we will have more than "first world" problems.

You must oppose and vote a resounding NO to SB 87, the children of Kansas need you.

Rebecca Hoge

Parent, educator, and public school advocate

Lenexa, KS

NAME: Veronica Holtz
TITLE: Kansas citizen, Andover School District Parent
EMAIL ADDRESS: veronicaleeholtz@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB87
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 an Andover Public School parent and a private school alumnus, I am adamant that tax dollars stay with our public institutions.

I understand how school vouchers sound like a great opportunity for Kansas students, but without proper limitations set within the program, they will not achieve their proposed benefits. Any economist can tell you what happens when you give a set of consumers an injection of funds, prices go up. Just ask parents in North Carolina. So now families who have always paid for private schools will continue paying basically the same, but public school dollars will be flowing to private institutions, many of which are affiliated with religious organizations. This flies in the face of separation of church and state.

Public schools are required to accept and accommodate all students within their district. Private schools do not have this same requirement. This means tax dollars would be funding institutions that aren't available to all. Also, what about all the children who do not live near any private schools, but their local school is being drained of funds at their expense

Again, I'm asking you to please vote NO on SB 87. It is not good for Kansas kids!

Veronica Holtz
Kansas Citizen and parent of two children in Andover Public Schools
Wichita, KS



900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 600
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
(785) 296-3203
www.ksde.gov

Danny Zeck
District 1

Melanie Haas
District 2

Michelle Dombrosky
District 3

Connie O'Brien
District 4

Cathy Hopkins
District 5

Beryl New
District 6

Dennis Hershberger
District 7

Betty J. Arnold
District 8

Jim Porter
District 9

Debby Potter
District 10

2/6/2025

Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 87

Senate Committee on Education
Cathy Hopkins and Danny Zeck, Liaisons
Kansas State Board of Education

Chair Erickson and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony regarding Senate Bill 87 on behalf of the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education voted to prioritize only using public funds for public schools in the Board's 2025 Legislative Priorities. Senate Bill 87 is counter to this priority by providing funding that would otherwise be available for public schools to families that choose to enroll their children in private schools.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our testimony,

Cathy Hopkins

Danny Zeck

NAME: Arley Hoskin

TITLE: Voter

EMAIL ADDRESS: arleyhoskin@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Oral

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Dear members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill SB 87.

I am a lifelong Kansan who attended public school from Kindergarten through 12th grade. I have a daughter in 5th grade in the Shawnee Mission School District. I firmly believe in the importance of a well-funded public education system. As a taxpayer, I do not want my tax dollars going to support private schools that do not hold up to the same standards as public schools and are often religiously based. I believe families who want to send their children to those schools should fund them out of their own money and not use taxpayer dollars.

Again, I believe tax dollars should not go to unregulated religious-based schools. It's not good financial policy and it isn't good for the next generation of Kansas who benefit from our public education system.

Sincerely,

Arley Hoskin

(Senate District 7)

Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Attachment 9

SB 87 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

February 5, 2025

Alyx Hubler, alyx.hubler@gmail.com

Parent in USD 232 school district and private citizen

Written Testimony

Date of hearing: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 87. Thank you for your time.

Public tax dollars belong with public schools:

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate **all** children and that are accountable to taxpayers.
- Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program.
- 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 private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice.

Private schools are not available to all, private schools get to choose who to accept

- We should not be reducing state revenues by providing funding for families to funnel that money to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve.
- Families with children with special needs and disabilities will not benefit from these tax credits as few private schools can accommodate their needs.
- Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind. Vouchers like this tax credit program do not provide real choice.

Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy

- Families who can already afford the choice to send their kids to private school will benefit greatly, while funding for public schools and other state services pay the price.

Public schools are a public good:

Senate Education Committee

February 6, 2025

Attachment 97

-For many benefiting from these tax credits, especially those with multiple kids, they will receive annual refunds and will contribute nothing towards the public goods in our state that all Kansans benefit from.

-Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools.

-A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system.

No oversight or accountability:

-Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools 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 those receiving these tax credits are providing the children with a quality education or any education at all. Kansans expect accountability for how our tax dollars are being used.

Impact on rural areas:

-Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.

-These tax credits will primarily benefit 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.

I am part of my local elementary school PTA and see first hand the need to keep these funds in our public schools. Please do not pass this bill which would lessen our ability to educate all children equally, regardless of income level.

Alyx Hubler
Shawnee, KS

SB 87 Opposition Testimony
Written Only
Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
John L. Hunt, jlhunt5245@gmail.com
Private Citizen in Blue Valley School District 229

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your service in support of all Kansans. I write today to ask you all to vote "no" on the advancement of Bill SB 87. I am opposed to the contemplated expansion of tax credits to 100% for contributions to private schools and the use of public funds to support private schools.

My education and much of my success stems from an excellent public school system. I believe the provision of vouchers or tax credits to parents who choose to utilize private schools undermines the long-term success of our public school system. I feel private schools are often faith based and narrow in their academic focus whereas a public education encourages critical thinking and a diversity of experience that forges a well-informed citizenry aware of wider societal options and challenges.

Public tax dollars belong with public schools:

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers.
- Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program.
- 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 private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice.
- Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans choosing not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education that is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

Private schools are not available to all, private schools get to choose who to accept

- We should not be reducing state revenues by providing funding for families to funnel that money to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve.

- 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 accommodate their needs.
- Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind. Vouchers like this tax credit program do not provide real choice.

Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy

- Families who can already afford the choice to send their kids to private school will benefit greatly, while funding for public schools and other state services pay the price.
- Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share.

Public schools are a public good:

- For many benefiting from these tax credits, especially those with multiple kids, they will receive annual refunds and will contribute nothing towards the public goods in our state that all Kansans benefit from.
- Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools.
- A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system.

No oversight or accountability:

- Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools 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 those receiving these tax credits are providing the children with a quality education or any education at all. Kansans expect accountability for how our tax dollars are being used.

Impact on rural areas:

- Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.
- These tax credits will primarily benefit 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.

So, respectfully, I ask you all to vote "no" on Bill SB 87. Public funds should NOT be used to support families that CHOOSE to abandon public education.

Thank you,

John L. Hunt
Overland Park, KS 66213
jlhunt5245@gmail.com

SB 87 Opposition Testimony
Written Only
Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Kathryn A. Hunt, kahunt5246@gmail.com
Private Citizen in Blue Valley School District 229

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your service in support of all Kansans. I write today to ask you all to vote "no" on the advancement of Bill SB 87. I am opposed to the contemplated expansion of tax credits to 100% for contributions to private schools and the use of public funds to support private schools.


My education and much of my success stems from an excellent public school system. I believe the provision of vouchers or tax credits to parents who choose to utilize private schools undermines the long-term success of our public school system. I feel private schools are often faith based and narrow in their academic focus whereas a public education encourages critical thinking and a diversity of experience that forges a well-informed citizenry aware of wider societal options and challenges.

Public tax dollars belong with public schools:

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers.
- Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program.
- 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 private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice.
- Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans choosing not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education that is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

Private schools are not available to all, private schools get to choose who to accept

- We should not be reducing state revenues by providing funding for families to funnel that money to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve.

Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Attachment 

- 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 accommodate their needs.
- Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind. Vouchers like this tax credit program do not provide real choice.

Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy

- Families who can already afford the choice to send their kids to private school will benefit greatly, while funding for public schools and other state services pay the price.
- Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share.

Public schools are a public good:

- For many benefiting from these tax credits, especially those with multiple kids, they will receive annual refunds and will contribute nothing towards the public goods in our state that all Kansans benefit from.
- Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools.
- A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system.

No oversight or accountability:

- Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools 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 those receiving these tax credits are providing the children with a quality education or any education at all. Kansans expect accountability for how our tax dollars are being used.

Impact on rural areas:

- Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.
- These tax credits will primarily benefit 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.

So, respectfully, I ask you all to vote "no" on Bill SB 87. Public funds should NOT be used to support families that CHOOSE to abandon public education.

Thank you,

Kathryn A. Hunt
Overland Park, KS 66213
kahunt5246@gmail.com

Re: Senate Bill 87

My name is Joan Jacobson

I am a resident of Overland Park Kansas. Both of our children attended public schools, and I am a former high school teacher and school counselor of 30 years in the Shawnee Mission School District.

My e-mail address is sojacobs@aol.com

I oppose passage of Senate Bill 87

Written testimony

Hearing February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB87.

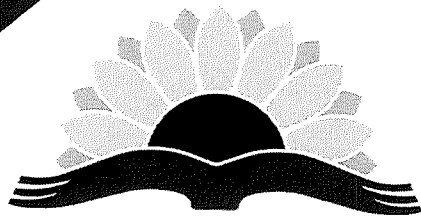
Having worked the majority of my life in public schools, I am well acquainted with the importance of maintaining the highest financial support of these institutions. Families whose children attend these schools know the high degree of competence of the professional staff, and the continual scrutiny of the educational goals and content of every class that public school students attend. The availability of classes for those students who require additional support in special education is a valuable asset that private schools often do not have available to their students. Also, private schools do not require their professional staff to have the strict degree requirements demanded by public schools. Moneys taken away from public education robs students of the benefits the breadth and depth this education can provide. Attending school with a larger and greater variety of students enriches them and makes them better citizens. Please oppose SB87, which provides financial support for those who chose not to partake in the many benefits a public school education affords our children.

Please vote NO on SB 87

Joan Jacobson

Former public school educator of 30 years

Overland Park, KS



KANSANS FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Opponent Written Only Testimony on SB 87
Senate Committee on Education

Thursday, February 6, 2025

By Ben Jones

Representative of Kansans for Excellence in Education

Chair Erickson, Vice-Chair Thomas, Ranking Minority Member Sykes and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opposition testimony on SB 87 on behalf of Kansans for Excellence in Education.

We oppose this legislation in that we see this as a back-door way to pass a full blown voucher system in Kansas at the expense of public schools. Increasing the tax credit from 75% to 100% and doubling the permanent cap from \$10,000,000 to \$20,000,000 reduces the revenue available for the state to fund public education and siphons those funds to private schools. When school districts are starved of funds to educate students who require special services, it hurts every public education student and local community.

Kansans for Excellence in Education, which is a non-partisan group supporting the success of all students, believes public dollars, even in the form of tax credits, should be invested in our public schools, and not be siphoned off to private schools, which can pick and chose which students they accept and are not overseen in the same way that legislators have demanded public schools be overseen.

Rural areas will be especially hard hit as funds desperately needed for districts that cover huge swaths of land, but smaller populations, can see budget cuts when the SGF is being starved of funds. The \$20,000,000 cap is greater than the overall operating budgets of districts the size of Girard and Hugoton. Apart from USD 457 Garden City, the 20 largest USDs by square mileage all have total operating budgets below \$20,000,000 to put this cut into the SGF into perspective.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 87.

SB 87 Testimony (Opposition, Written)
House Committee on Education
February 6, 2025 Hearing

Hilary Junk
KS Resident

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I write in opposition to SB 87 as it is fiscally irresponsible for the state to, through tax credits, assume additional expenditures that were previously covered by private sector spending. The bill is stretching beyond its original intent to support low-income families; with the proposed expansion, the committee is creating an entitlement that neglects its fiduciary duty that transparency accompanies the collection and spending of tax dollars.

Concerns about the bill's philosophy:

Choosing not to engage with a public service does not mean that one is entitled to the monies that support that public good.

- The state park near me is not to my liking, but there are private country clubs near me. Can I claim a tax credit that may be larger than my tax assessment to pay for private club dues? **No.**
- I disagree with the Kansas Attorney General's use of time and resources to pursue cases restricting voting practices when there is no material evidence of voter fraud. Can I claim a tax credit for my tax dollars that fund the Attorney General's Office because we don't share the same "values"? **No.**

Opting out or disagreeing with a public good does not mean I am entitled to monies that support public goods and services.

Concerns about the bill's logistics:

- **Program expansion is ripe for abuse by tax-avoiders:** In economic terms, tax credits are incentives. This bill's promise of a dollar-for-dollar reduction in a taxpayer's tax liability and expansion of the income limit extend a benefit meant for low-income families to higher-income families. "Donors" funnel money to private schools and are reimbursed in full by the state.
- **No data:** I appreciate that there are stringent guidelines for how tax funds are spent. If dollars that were going towards a public good are directed to a private entity, most reasonable people would expect for the standards and reporting would be equivalent. There are no such mechanics in this bill. How will we know if the program is "successful"? Trust, AND verify.

Concerns about the bill's impact:

- **Transference of tax burden from rural to suburban areas:** Given that over half of Kansas counties do not have a single private school, it's highly likely that this bill would supplement the Kansas families who already pay private tuition in more populated areas like the Wichita metro area and Johnson County.

My professional success in the finance and investment management industry is a testament to the high-quality public education I received. After 15+ years working at hedge funds and asset managers, I know full well that transparency and oversight are vital parts of prudent fiscal policy. SB 87 lacks a way to assess if taxpayer dollars credited and thus diverted to private or home schools are being used properly or measured.

I respectfully request that you vote no on SB 87. Please do not create a financial entitlement and neglect your fiduciary duty to Kansas students, 90% of whom benefit from our public education system. Transparency should accompany the collection and spending of tax dollars.

Sincerely,
Hilary Junk

Cc: Mike Thompson mike.thompson@senate.ks.gov
Laura Williams laura.williams@house.ks.gov

TO: Senate Committee on Education
RE: SB 87 – Written Only Testimony in Opposition
FR: Matthew Kleinmann
DT: February 18, 2025

Chairwoman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matthew Kleinmann, and I am a resident of Wyandotte County. I appreciate the opportunity to share my concerns regarding Senate Bill 87. I strongly oppose this bill because it diverts public tax dollars to private schools, weakens public education, and disproportionately harms rural communities.

SB 87 significantly expands the state's Tax Credit Scholarship program, allowing private school students—including those who have never attended public school—to receive taxpayer-funded scholarships. This change shifts the focus away from aiding low-income students in public schools and instead subsidizes private education for families already enrolled in nonpublic institutions. By eliminating the public school enrollment requirement, the bill opens the door for an unchecked expansion of state-funded private education at the expense of Kansas's public schools.

The financial consequences of this bill are alarming. The 100% tax credit for donors allows individuals and corporations to reclaim every dollar contributed, effectively transforming tax liability into private school funding. A \$500,000 corporate donation, for example, results in a \$500,000 loss to the state budget. The \$25 million annual cap on tax credits is set to grow to \$31.25 million by 2026, further draining resources from essential public programs, including special education and teacher salaries. Public schools already struggle with a \$750 million underfunding gap in special education services, forcing districts to divert funds from general education budgets. Every dollar funneled into private scholarships reduces the ability of public schools to serve all students, particularly those with disabilities and high-need backgrounds.

SB 87 also disproportionately harms rural Kansas. Over 60 counties in the state have no private schools, meaning students in these areas will never benefit from the program, while their public schools suffer budget reductions. Rural districts, where 40% of Kansas schools serve fewer than 400 students, rely heavily on state funding. When enrollment declines due to funding shifts, school closures become inevitable. The loss of a local school in a rural town doesn't just impact students—it leads to job losses, economic downturns, and the weakening of the community itself. The Kansas Association of School Boards warns that expanding vouchers will accelerate rural school closures, stripping communities of their most vital institutions.

Beyond funding concerns, private schools benefiting from SB 87 are not held to the same standards as public schools. They are not required to admit students with disabilities, offer support for English language learners, or follow state-approved curriculum and assessment guidelines. Unlike public schools, which undergo annual audits and transparency measures, private institutions operate without the same oversight. The use of public funds with little accountability is not sound public policy.

Rather than expanding tax credits for private schools, Kansas should focus on evidence-based reforms that strengthen public education. Fully funding special education, increasing teacher pay to address the state's 1,800-teacher shortage, and ensuring proper oversight of at-risk student funding should be the legislature's priority. We cannot afford to lose millions annually to an unregulated program that does not serve the majority of its students.

SB 87 represents a dangerous shift in Kansas's education policy, one that privileges private interests over public accountability. I urge you to reject this bill and instead invest in policies that strengthen our public schools, ensuring that every Kansas student has access to a quality education.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Matthew Kleinmann
Wyandotte County, Kansas

Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Attachment 10²

NAME: Eileen Knoblauch
TITLE: Kansas Citizen and parent
EMAIL ADDRESS: eileen.knoblauch@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 Erikson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. I am the mother to three children in the Blue Valley Public School District of Kansas. My husband and I rely heavily on the great education our children receive in the public school system. Not only general education, but the special education two of our three children have needed have allowed them to be successful and thriving students today. This will only help them to be intelligent and good contributing members of our community, state and country in the future. When my husband and I moved to Kansas City 11 years ago, we sought out the best public schools, not only for our children's education, but also knowing that strong public school systems create strong educated and economical communities. Public funds **DO NOT** belong in private schools. This is why I **STRONGLY oppose SB 87** that would divert public funds into private schools.

For starters, the Tax Credit Scholarship program already exists in Kansas. There are still hundreds of thousands of students still eligible under the current guidelines who are not utilizing scholarships, thus there is no need for expansion.

Second, 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 current program to understand why these at-risk students aren't receiving scholarships. Additionally, private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind. Expanding the program to private school students, leaves fewer spots for the at-risk students the program was again intended to help.

Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will also divert even more funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education, to subsidize the private choices of some parents

Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Attachment *100*

and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas. This program already allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors. Expanding the tax credit to 100% is even more egregious. The Tax Credit Scholarship program, like most voucher programs, is welfare for the wealthy.

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. 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. Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education.

Furthermore, 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.

Lastly, rural students (and communities) are harmed 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 suburban 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.

For all of these reasons, I ask you to **please vote NO on Bill SB 87.**

Thank you for your time, attention and consideration,

Eileen Knoblauch

Leawood, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Vicki Kohl

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: vmkohl54@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

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

This program has the same pitfalls as any other voucher scheme as it diverts **public** tax dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions. The state government should not allow such lack of oversight and discrimination in any school which accepts public tax dollars, whether directly from taxes or, in this case, from a diversion of public tax dollars.

Additionally, it is a lucrative tax avoidance scheme that is especially beneficial to corporations and wealthy donors. Allowing the such entities to reduce their taxes to benefit private schools should not be allowed.

The expansion proposed by HB 2136, the Tax Credit Scholarship program, is clearly not needed.

Plenty of students under the current guidelines are still eligible for the Tax Credit Scholarship program. There is no need to expand. In fact, expanding the program to private school students will just take limited spots from at-risk students who supposedly were the ones in need.

In 2023, only 1,340 students were participating despite 230,000 public school students being eligible. There were not significant changes to these numbers in 2024.

Because there is no data or accountability within the Tax Credit Scholarship program, we don't know if eligible students:

- applied to a private school and were denied admission because of their religion
- applied to private school but couldn't pass academic admission criteria
- live in one of the 60+ counties in Kansas where there are no private school options
- have special needs that private schools aren't required to accommodate
- are happy with their public schools and thus there is no real need for this voucher program

These voucher programs aren't available to all. **Most importantly**, public dollars belong to our public schools that accept and educate all children. Diverting our state general funds to private schools undermines public education funding.

Senate Education Committee

February 6, 2025

Attachment 10⁵

Please vote no on bill SB 87.

Vicki Kohl
Kansas Citizen
Olathe

NAME: Jeanne Koontz
TITLE: Kansas Citizen and Parent
EMAIL ADDRESS: koontz.jeanne@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 your service on this committee working to ensure all Kansas kids have access to a great education. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

I am currently a parent of two children who attend school in the Hutchinson School District and receive Special Education services for Gifted. Public schools are vital to our communities:

- They help us have an educated society which ensures a qualified workforce.
- They provide education for all.
- They provide a space for kids to encounter and experience people from different cultures, different socio-economic backgrounds, different races, and different abilities. I believe this leads to a more welcoming and compassionate society.

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 private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice. In the rural parts of our state, including Hutchinson, there are no private school choices outside of religious schools. Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans choosing not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education that is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

I implore you to protect public schools and vote no on SB 87.

Jeanne Koontz
Hutchinson

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education
Lynnette Krieger-Zook
Parent/Grandparent USD 259 USD 308 USD 313 USD 266
Retired Public School Special Education Teacher
kriegzook@gmail.com
SB 87. Senate Education Committee
OPPONENT
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.

The Tax Credit Scholarship program currently exists. This new proposal significantly increases tax credit for donors to 100% and increases the program cap up from \$10 million to \$20 million, doubling the program cost. This increase is a blatant increase for corporations and wealthy for tax avoidance. This new bill would further erode Kansas tax revenue and place the burden on our middle and lower income taxpayers.

In closing I am asking you to vote NO on bill SB 87. The current bill provides a tax credit, is designed specifically for family income of 250% of federal poverty level and addresses students who were in low performing public schools to attend a private school. The current bill guidelines still provide for many current students.

Lynnette Krieger-Zook
Buhler, KS
Reno County

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Lauren Lane

TITLE: Owner & Designer of Landscape by Lauren, KS Citizen & Parent of SMSD student

EMAIL ADDRESS: Laurenlane120@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

Dear members of the Senate Education Committee,

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

As a mother of a Shawnee Mission School District student and future students of public education, I'm opposed to this bill as it takes public tax dollars that should be used to strengthen our public schools and make Kansas a great place to raise children and gives it to families who make a personal choice to obtain religious or non-public education.

We should be using tax dollars to strengthen our public schools so that all students have access to a great education – not only those who can otherwise afford a private education.

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

Lauren Lane
Prairie Village, KS

NAME: Megan Langford
TITLE: Parent in Shawnee Mission School District
EMAIL ADDRESS: langford.megan@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,

Thank you for reading my testimony and listening to the concerns of Kansans. I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 87.

I grew up in public schools, and my kids are growing up in public schools. Our public schools not only educate our kids, they prepare them for being integral members of society. A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students. Diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system.

Public dollars need to stay in public schools. Public schools accept and educate ALL students. They cannot pick and choose which students to accept. Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind. Vouchers like this tax credit program do not provide real choice. Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans choosing not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education, which is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

Please vote no on HB 2136. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Megan Langford
Lenexa, KS

February 6, 2025

To: Senate Education Committee

From: Melinda Lewis, melindaklewis@gmail.com, 4630 W. 70th Street, Prairie Village, KS 66208

Re: SB 87 Opposition Testimony

Chair Erickson & Honorable members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am a Kansas taxpayer, parent, and public education patron (Shawnee Mission School District, USD512), I oppose SB 87 for several reasons. Most personally, I oppose any effort that would take public dollars from the public schools that are the only educational institutions that must serve the needs of all children, including those who need special education. Three of my four children have IEPs and have received special education services that were essential to their academic success and overall well-being. I am grateful for our strong public school system that provided for our children's needs, for the opportunity of our child who does not have an IEP to learn alongside students with diverse intellectual, physical, and emotional needs, and for the public investment that is a thriving education system. Private schools, which are neither required to accept nor accommodate special education students, should not receive the diverted public funds we need to meet students' needs in our public schools. A tax credit such as those provided in SB 87 would have been of little to no value to our family, because what we needed—what public school uniquely provides—was an educational institution with expertise, capacity, and commitment to serve individual learning needs of students with a variety of exceptionalities, which is what our children (especially the oldest) presents. Our personal experience and my years of observation of the excellent public schools we have in Kansas have demonstrated resoundingly that vouchers like SB 87 do not provide real 'choice', which can only come with equitable, meaningful, and workable options.

I hope the Kansas Legislature focuses its attention on providing the funding, governance structures, and collaboration public schools need to meet the challenges of post-pandemic learning and equip our children for success in the rapidly changing global economy. That work begins with rejecting policies that would erode the public foundation of our public schools as a common good.

Thank you for your service to Kansas. I hope you will oppose SB 87 and ensure that public schools remain a cornerstone of opportunity for all Kansas students.



Melinda Lewis

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Jacqueline Lightcap

TITLE: Parent and school board member in USD 437 Auburn-Washburn

EMAIL ADDRESS: jacquielightcap@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 SB 87. Despite being called a “tax credit,” it’s still a voucher program that will cut revenue to our public schools, causing harm to Kansas public schools and shortchanging the education of our youngest Kansans.

Here are a few reasons why educational “tax credits” or vouchers are bad for Kansas’s public schools.

- **They hurt student achievement.** In states that have implemented a similar program, unaccredited school vouchers hurt student achievement more than the 2020 pandemic (sources below).
- **They undermine public schools.** They divert resources away from public schools, attended by 90% of students, to fund the education of a few select students.
- **Private school tax credits or vouchers do not offer real choice.** Private schools can choose their students. Public schools are bound by law to accept all students.
- **Tax credits or vouchers fail to provide accountability to taxpayers.** Vouchers for private schools do not have appropriate oversight, which is critical when using public tax dollars.

As a parent to two products of Kansas public schools (one is in college and one is a high school senior this year), I can personally speak to the quality of our public education system in preparing students for postsecondary success. Seven years of serving on a public school board has also shown me the amazing work done by our schools on a daily basis. Public schools keep students at the center of their budgetary decisions; why would we want to divert funding from them, making it harder to do their critical work?

Public tax dollars should be used to fund services benefitting **all** citizens. I urge you to vote no on SB 87.

Jacqueline Lightcap
Topeka

Sources: R. Joseph Waddington & Mark Berends, Impact of the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program: Achievement Effects for Students in Upper Elementary & Middle School, 37 J. of Policy Analysis & Mgmt. 4, 738-808 (Aug. 2018); Atila Abdulkadiroğlu, Parag A. Pathak, & Christopher R. Walters, Free to Choose: Can School Choice Reduce Student Achievement?, 10 Am. Econ. Journal: Applied Econ. 1, 175-206 (Jan. 2018); David Figlio & Krzysztof Karbownik, Inst. (July 2016); U.S. Dep’t of Educ., Evaluation of Ohio’s EdChoice Scholarship Program: Selection, Competition, & Performance Effects, Fordham Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program: Impacts Two Years After Students Applied (June 2018).

Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Attachment 1/1

EMAIL ADDRESS:

jordan.oakley10@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:
Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:

Written only

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

**Chair Erickson & Members of the
Committee,**

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

This bill is a detriment to our rural counties that will not benefit from a tax credit opportunity. These rural counties will not be funded through the public funds that they are dependent on if we pass this bill.

My husband and I both attended rural public schools and our children will both attend public schools. I'm continuously disappointed in the efforts to take away funding from my children's education to benefit those who will not be held to the same standard.

Please vote no on SB 87

Sincerely,
Jordan Lichtenauer

Ottawa, KS

February 5, 2025

Amanda Lucero
1711 E. Classen St
Wichita, KS
alucero@stannewichita.org 316-554-4033

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 Amanda Lucero and my sons Jesus and Jose attend Bishop Carroll Catholic school, as well as Max, Lorenzo and Aundrea who attend St. Anne Catholic School. 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.

Amanda Lucero
Wichita, KS