

**27 February 2025**

**Senate Bill #254**

**Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs**

**Written Testimony – Position of Opposition**

**Phillip Wrigley**

**Civics Teacher & Social Studies Department Chair at Topeka High School**

Chairman Thompson and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 254.

I am dad to two wonderful little girls, a longtime scout leader, and a Civics Teacher and Social Studies Department Chair at beautiful Topeka High School. I have been a public school teacher for 17 years. I have built a life around the needs, dreams, and futures of the young people in my care. I take great joy in helping my children, my scouts, and my students learn and grow everyday. These young people work hard to become the people we tell them they can become. Their hope for the future and the possibilities before them is one of the things that animates me everyday.

There is a quote that I think about often in my work with young people, from preeminent biologist Stephen Jay Gould, "We pass through this world but once. Few tragedies can be more extensive than the stunting of life, few injustices deeper than the denial of an opportunity to strive or even to hope, by a limit imposed from without, but falsely identified as lying within." The immigration status of a child or young adult is imposed by us from without, not inherent in them. They did not choose the circumstances of their birth or migration.

I have witnessed the despair of a student who worked tirelessly to prepare themselves for college, only to have their plans for a university education dashed by an immigration status they previously knew nothing about. I have witnessed purpose reignited in the heart of a teen who found out the future they dreamed of might actually be possible because of in-state tuition eligibility. The effect of SB 254 would deny the opportunity to strive or even to hope to countless Kansas kids who have only known life in our towns, who have contributed to the health and wealth of our communities. Its effect will be despair and hopelessness, nothing more.

These graduates of Kansas high schools and their taxpaying families deserve in-state tuition just as much as my own children will. They will put in the work for a positive future if they have hope. For that reason, I oppose SB 254 and I hope you will too.

Sincerely,

Phillip Wrigley, M.Ed., NBCT