

Heather Hayden

Private Citizen

2/24/2025

SB 254

WRITTEN ONLY

Chair Thompson and Members of the Committee, thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts on SB 254 today. My name is Heather Hayden and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing you today to urge the committee to protect educational opportunities for all Kansans by voting no on SB 254.

I am a lifelong Kansas resident and have spent the past 14 years teaching middle and high school in the state. Throughout my life and career, I have worked closely with undocumented students and their families. The immigrants I have had the privilege of knowing are among the kindest and most hardworking individuals I have ever met. Many have come to the United States to escape hardships in their home countries—hardships that, in some cases, the U.S. played a role in creating.

Many undocumented students arrive as young children with their families. They grow up in our school system, forming an integral part of our communities just like their U.S.-born peers. Some have spent their entire academic careers in Kansas public schools; this is the only home they know. Their families work hard, contribute to our economy, and support their children's education—all without access to public benefits or grants for college.

Undocumented students have grown up alongside our own children. They have lived, learned, and built their futures here in Kansas. Denying them in-state tuition because of their immigration status is unjust. Every student who has built a life in Kansas deserves the opportunity to pursue higher education at the same cost as their peers. Undocumented immigrants have the right to attend college in the state they call home.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story and thoughts on this bill. I urge you to vote no on SB 254 to protect educational opportunities for all Kansans. I appreciate your time and consideration.