



Making public schools great for every child

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

Mark Desetti, Testimony
House Education Committee
March 18, 2013
House Bill 2400

Madame Chair, members of the committee; thank you for the opportunity to speak as an opponent to HB 2400.

This bill is essentially a voucher bill for students with special needs in the form of a tax credit.

What essentially does this bill do?

- It allows corporations a 70% tax credit for “scholarships” of up to \$8,000 for low income students with IEPs to attend a private school. (p 6, lines 5-16)
- It creates yet another massive hole in the state budget – potentially a \$10 million hole in revenue collections annually. This at the same time that the budget committees are proposing enormous reductions in post-secondary education funding and even the elimination of the state match for very low income families in the state’s 529 college savings plan. (p 6, lines 21-22)
- It provides a “benefit” for students on IEPs but again there is nothing to say the IEP must be implemented or followed at all.
- It allows private schools to skim gifted students out of the public schools.
- It asserts that non-accredited schools are every bit as good as accredited schools.
- It requires no reporting whatsoever on the performance of students granted such scholarships – there would be no accounting to the state of whether or not this program ever benefited even one student.
- It does all of this at the same time the state has been found to be underfunding the public school system in Kansas and is about to enter mediation in an attempt to settle the Gannon lawsuit before going into further litigation.
- It does this following year of cuts in funding to the public schools of Kansas.

HB 2400 does nothing to help public education in Kansas. It simply creates yet another hole in the state’s revenue picture for a program that has no particular purpose other than to remove children from the public schools.

I urge you to reject this bill and turn your attention to appropriately funding public education in Kansas such that every child will have access to a quality public education.