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JOHN BRADFORD
40TH DISTRICT

TO: Chairman Ron Highland, Members, House Committee on Education
FROM: Representative John Bradford
DATE: February 2, 2016
SUBJECT: Testimony Supporting HB2486-School Bonding

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2486 - School Bonding Bill

In 1992, the Kansas State Legislature passed the Capitol Improvement Fund, better known as the Bond and Interest State Aid Program “wherein the state assumes a percentage of the bond payment. The amount assumed by the state is based on the assessed valuation divided by student enrollment. This amount varies slightly each year during the life of the bond issue.

Each and every year as the Legislature returns to start a new session, we are faced with new unbudgeted cost from school bonds that were approved by voters across the school districts since the end of the previous session, to build new school facilities.

From June until December of 2015, \$300 million dollars in new school bonds were approved by voters at the local district level. This requires the state legislature to now cover \$36 million (this session) in new bond aid and interests that has not previously been appropriated by the legislative body.

Many school districts are building new facilities simply because of the threat/or perception of the potential loss of state funding. This results in wasteful and un-needed use of state funds. There is nothing factored into their decisions that recognize the need for efficiencies or being cost-effective. For example, beyond the sometimes exorbitant cost of the buildings themselves, are the operational costs to run these facilities over future years.

The Legislature must develop a school bond review process to ensure that we are not continually blind-sided year after year with un-appropriated claims for additional funding at the start of each legislative session. House Bill 2486 is the solution to this problem.

House Bill 2486 establishes a six-member committee consisting of two members from the House, two members from the Senate, and two members from the State Board of

Education. The proposed bond issue will be brought before the committee prior to the local school district taking the bond issue to a vote of the people.

If the committee approves the bond for some percentage of matching funds, all subsequent modifications to the bonds, as approved by the voters, will require the district to request modifications before both the committee and the district voters.

I ask for your support in passage of House Bill 2486.

John Bradford
Kansas State Representative, District 40
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