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Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 71

January 29, 2015

Chairman Masterson and Members of the Committee,

I am Stuart Little, appearing on behalf of the Shawnee Mission School District #512. Additionally, the Blue Valley School District #229 and the Olathe Public Schools #233 support this testimony and are opposed to Senate Bill 71.

Senate Bill 71 will amend the school finance formula passed during the 2014 legislative session. The Governor approved the new law and the Legislature approved the funding for the formula. The school formula and budget were established in response to the Gannon decision from the State Supreme Court. Senate Bill 71 will reverse less than one year later the formula adjustments and funding agreed to by the Legislature and the Governor. The Governor's budget fully funds the current year formula obligations.

With four months remaining in the current fiscal year, this bill would impose a retroactive budget reduction on the three largest Johnson County school districts. School district budgets and mill levies were long ago set and approved to fund the budget based on the school finance formula the 2014 Legislature and the Governor approved. At this point in the fiscal year, there are very few means available for districts to modify budgets or recoup through LOB adjustments to address these proposed reductions. The options to cut expenditures at this point in the fiscal year are very limited and reductions will come out of the classroom.

Some in the Legislature may be displeased with the outcome of the school finance formula and funding passed, but the arbitrary revision to the formula in Senate Bill 71 is a retroactive policy choice that will have a \$10.9 million impact on Johnson County schools. The Governor has requested and the Legislature will consider substantial changes to school finance and funding for the future years. We are prepared to participate in that public policy debate but Senate Bill 71 is a detrimental move against our districts transgressing the commitment made by the 2014 Legislature and contrary to the Governor's proposed current year budget recommendations.

We oppose Senate Bill 71.