



*Individual Liberty*  
*Economic Liberty*  
*Strengthen Families*  
*Sovereign States Rights*  
*Ending Judicial Activism*

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March 10, 2015

SB 273 School Block Grants  
Proponent testimony in favor of this bill

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

The first thing that sticks out to me on this bill – **“NO USAGE OF BASE STATE AID”** language!! This is the language that the school districts and their lawyers have used to sue the State for additional money even when they are receiving additional monies.

A perfect example of these flaws is this last Spring after the legislature appropriated \$126 million (numbers given by the State Board of Education). Yet, we find out in November that we are funding more than \$200 million instead. Budgets are unattainable when these kinds of flaws exist.

We have diverted money away from classrooms now for 23 years. We have watched as we have had a 6% increase in state enrollment, while we have increased teachers at a rate of 20% and nonteaching staff (Administration) more than 40%. We have invested BILLIONS in new schools for that 6% increase of students which has caused ridiculous amounts of increased overhead for each district.

The current funding formula has continued to be flawed while it considers wealthy school districts with high property values impoverished. Since the formula was developed in 1992 before the widespread use of virtual education, it inadequately deals with technological advances. The formula is designed in a way that even though there are 460,000 students utilizing the online school system. Taxpayers actually pay for more than 800,000 students, yet only 55 cents of every dollar actually makes it to the classroom.

We have had no showing of increased graduation rates (virtually flat), reading and math testing are flat (or dropped), ACT scores are flat, and we have a record number of freshman students taking remedial courses in college, than ever before.

This bill appears to provide unlimited flexibility to the school districts to direct money to the classrooms. By having unrestricted “State Aid” which unlocks funds not available to the districts now. Schools need flexibility to help provide solutions to our education problems. More money is not the solution.

This is vital for our investments in our future (OUR CHILDREN and their academic futures). It is my hope that outcomes will be the standard by which we measure student success in the future, not monies spent.

This seems to be the most responsible way of transitioning to a new formula (hopefully being simplified) without having to recreate the wheel.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chris Brown  
Wichita, KS  
316-644-8075 Cell  
[browncontract@hotmail.com](mailto:browncontract@hotmail.com)