



WELLSVILLE

Unified School District 289

2/24/2021

To: Senate Education Committee

From: Ryan Bradbury - Superintendent, USD 289 Wellsville

Re: Proponent Testimony - SB 31

Madam Chair and members of the committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB 31.

My name is Ryan Bradbury, and I have the honor of serving as the superintendent of the USD 289 Wellsville. Wellsville is a small, rural school district located approximately 20 minutes southwest of Olathe. Wellsville has always prided itself on being a community that supports its students and schools. Wellsville's last bond issue was in 2000. The current state aid rate for that bond issue was 28%. Currently, our state aid rate for a bond issue in 2020-2021 is 0%.

While our district may appear to be wealthier in 2021 than in 2000 due to increased valuations in our district, the reality is that housing prices have increased substantially placing further burden on the average homeowner. This has created an equity issue for districts such as USD 289 in terms of addressing facility needs through the use of bonds.

For example, under current law, a \$10 million bond issue in USD 289 would cost the owner of a \$125,000 home approximately \$131 a year. Under SB 31, the cost would be reduced to approximately \$97. While this example uses very modest numbers, the result is still the same. With rising construction costs and assessed valuations rapidly rising in our area, SB 31 will provide support and relief to both the local tax payer and school district as they work together to provide facilities for students.

For the past 18 months, the USD 289 Facilities Committee has been working together to identify and prioritize facility needs as part of our long range facilities plan. USD 289 is considering grants, capital outlay funds, energy projects, and a bond initiative to fund facility needs in USD 289. This work is not being done to build new buildings, but keep current buildings maintained and running with system replacements and modest remodels. The current list of needs is much larger than what can be funded through Capital Outlay or an Energy Project. The USD 289 Facilities Committee and USD 289 Board of Education have worked tirelessly to prioritize vital facility needs and fund them in a manner that maximizes taxpayers' investments in the district while being very conscious of the impact on the individual taxpayer.

The changes to KSA 72-5462 have created an equity issue for school districts when it comes to funding facility improvements and upgrades. SB 31 goes a long way to address the equity issue currently in KSA 72-5462.

Thank you for your consideration.