

February 9, 2023

Testimony to the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

NAME: Nicholas Orlando

TITLE: Shawnee Mission School District Parent, Special Education Father

EMAIL ADDRESS: Nicholas.orlando172@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: SB 128, Opportunity Tax Credit

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 128 and my frustration with onslaught of efforts in Topeka to manipulate funding for public schools.

My three children attend public schools in the Shawnee Missions School District as well as 9 of my nieces and nephews. My son – who is a first grader – has Down Syndrome. As a regular volunteer at the school, I have seen first-hand both the benefits and struggle of the district in trying to appropriately resource their students and support their teachers and staff. In fact, my serving as a regular volunteer came about because of the gross understaffing of the classrooms – especially for the most challenging students.

The lack of special education as well as lack of requirements to provide services in private schools is particularly concerning. Public tax dollars belong in public schools that are both willing and required to educate all children. Shifting funds to private schools furthers the gap between children with and without disabilities. Taxpayer dollars should only be used for education that has oversight and transparency.

As you make decisions about this bill, please consider the risk it places the vast majority of students at if it is passed. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicholas Orlando  
Parent, SMSD  
Prairie Village