

February 7, 2023

Testimony to the Senate Education Committee

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BILL NUMBER: SB 128, Opportunity Tax Credit

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written-Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

As a parent with two children in Kansas public schools, including one child who benefits from special education services, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 128.

Public tax dollars belong to public schools that educate students

- of all learning abilities, including those needing special services
- of all/any religious affiliation
- of all socio-economic levels
- in all communities: rural, suburban or urban.

Public schools have accreditation, accountability and transparency requirements that private institutions and home schools do not have.

Any school that receives public funds whether through vouchers, tax credits or another back door method should be required to meet all of these same obligations. To allow otherwise, is not only a gigantic financial disservice to our public schools, but is a disservice to the children whose families enroll them in non-public institutions.

Instead of funneling dollars away from public education, the Kansas legislature should be focusing on fully funding special education, recruiting/training/retraining qualified teachers, and offering state of the art education to all of its children through public education.

When we moved to the Kansas City area, we specifically chose to live on the Kansas side of the metro for the quality public schools offered. Great public schools elevate and create communities. New residents choose their home to reside in the boundaries of well-rated schools, whether they have school-aged children or not, because great public schools equal great property values. Employers are drawn to communities with high quality public schools.

Every school-aged child in Kansas deserves to live in the boundaries of well-rated school. I urge you to invest here, in elevating all Kansas public schools, so all Kansas children, whether they live in a small-town or large community, whether they have special needs or are academically gifted, regardless of their religious affiliation or their families' socio-economic status, can receive the highest quality education.

Support great education for all students. **Vote NO on Senate Bill 128.**

Julie Ríos

Shawnee