

Written testimony in support of SB 128: The Ad Astra Opportunity tax Credit.

Submitted: February 8, 2023

My name is Roger Kornfeld. I am presently retired; however I have and still pay a healthy dose of Kansas taxes. We have eight now adult children. We were primarily a home-schooling family, with some selective use of private Christian schooling near the end of our education journey. I wish to offer testimony in support of SB 128.

It was a very aggravating situation throughout our educational years, of having to pay extensive taxes that went to support only the public schools, while at the same time having to fund from our own resources, the educational choice we felt was more desirable for our children. We would also have liked to have been able to consider a higher percentage of private Christian schooling, however it was simply unaffordable.

This situation is and has been for a long time very unfair, as for all but the most affluent parents who wish to choose a different educational method for their children than the public school, have those options simply out of reach. And even for those who can afford to pay twice, it is simply unfair to be required to do so. While I wish this disparity had been corrected years ago, I support it being corrected now, rather than never, for the benefit of parents of children today and going forward. And as a taxpayer, while I think the whole school funding formula is broken, passage of this bill would give me at least a measure of satisfaction knowing that parents who choose schooling options other than the public schools, will have my tax dollars able to follow them and work for them.

This bill would support true educational freedom, providing parental choice that considers the unique learning needs of each student and the values of their parents. SB 128 would finally provide a means to make education access equitable because it would give parents the financial freedom to direct the education of their children as they deem best for them. As a conservative, I believe that competition in the business world leads to better products and services for the average consumer. Funding education through a system where dollars follow the student will encourage better educational outcomes for all students - public and private. With the Ad Astra Opportunity Tax Credit, this opportunity would become a reality. The current method only supports the system, rather than the student. We are asking for you to support students, not systems. Please provide your support for the Ad Astra Opportunity tax Credit, so that true and equitable educational choice for families can become a reality. Many states have already experienced the benefits of a school choice program - Kansas should be a leader in this movement, not playing catch up.

Lastly, I would like to address opposition to this bill. Personally, I do not understand why anyone should oppose this bill, so I can only assume that opposition would come from those who want to support the system rather than support students, and/or they have an opposition to the fact that some parents may choose a faith-based education method for their children. I find this opposition a bit offensive. Just because someone has this opinion regarding how their tax dollars are utilized, does not, at least should not, give them the right to edict how my tax dollars are utilized. The opposition to this bill has essentially had it their way for many decades, and I think we can all agree that the education system is broken and needs major improvements. I believe in parental choice, even if some parents may choose in ways that I feel are unwise. That is the fair and right way, and it is way past time for Kansas to move in that direction. For those who want to only support the public school system, they are free to give their resources over and above their taxes to their chosen schools, just as home school and private school parents have long been forced to do, if they were even able to do so.

Respectfully,

Roger Kornfeld