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Opponent Testimony on

HB 2612 relating to school district accreditation; requiring school districts to be in compliance with all state laws and rules and regulations to be accredited

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Madam Chair, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to HB 2612. This bill improperly usurps the role of the State Board of Education, is overbroad and is bad public policy that would have significant collateral damage.

As parents, we obviously want our districts to be in compliance with state laws and regulations, but even we understand the huge number of laws and regulations governing them. We understand that sometimes laws are flawed or open to interpretation. Under this bill, if a district acts in good faith, it could still lose accreditation if a different interpretation is deemed the “correct” one.

We support the State Board’s model of working with districts to bring them into compliance. Pulling a district’s accreditation for any violation, no matter how small and for any amount of time, without opportunity to cure the violation is a nuclear option. Removing accreditation would hurt students applying to colleges who would have to say their diploma is from an unaccredited school. Removing accreditation would destabilize communities and harm property values for homeowners. This bill’s approach reminds us of the approach during No Child Left Behind that was later rejected because of the harm it inflicted on communities.

We also note this law does not apply to accredited private schools nor does it remove eligibility for the tax credit scholarship program for schools not accredited by the state. If the legislature deems this bill good policy, it should apply to private schools, too.

Thank you for your consideration of these and other issues relating to HB 2612.