

Chairperson Williams and K-12 committee,

Thank you for taking time to read to my written testimony on HB2612. My name is Curtis Nightingale and I am a registered Republican in Kansas, and former office holder myself. I also happen to be a professional educator. As I have watched my chose profession be attacked and maligned by those elected to represent ALL of Kansas—specifically my fellow Republicans—I am left questioning why is this happening? I have spent my life dedicated to the betterment of the students of our great state. I hold multiple master’s degrees in my field and yet, I see my representatives do little to represent me, or the families I serve. As I review this bill, it is clear there is an assumption that I, as well as other school districts, are not following the established laws of Kansas.

Once upon a time, the Republican Party Platform was about small government and local control. The party I see before me with their banned books lists, overreach on local control in the form of open enrollment, and attempts to usurp public funds for private interests is not that party any longer. To now threaten school accreditation of Districts across the state through the manipulation and interpretation of laws created to further expand governmental control over local elected boards with what amounts to “busy work,” e.g. website postings, printed legal notices, and seat counting to name a few, is a new low. Accreditation should remain in the hands of the department who has the staff, skills, understanding, and expertise working with schools and school districts and the resources to support all schools. Not a battalion of auditors and lobbyists.

I won’t get into the failure of the State Legislature to follow their own laws regarding regular and special education funding so as to avoid the intentional manipulation and interpretation of those laws to avoid doing the right thing.

In summary, Kansas schools are governed by the State School Board and LOCALLY elected boards of education. Please allow our local boards to monitor educators and the daily work they perform. If they are intentionally breaking the law, I’m sure our boards can handle the issue. Aren’t there other issues our dually elected representatives could or should be addressing?

Do the right thing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Nightingale', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

South Hutchinson, Kansas