

February 5, 2024

**Opponent (Written-Only) Testimony to the House K-12 Education Budget Committee
Bill HB 2612**

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I urge you to vote NO on bill HB 2612. Tying a school district's accreditation to its compliance with all applicable laws and regulations could be extremely detrimental to any number of Kansas students and Kansas communities. It could also bring costly litigation to our state.

Graduating from an unaccredited school could hurt a student's chances for college admission, receiving financial aid or scholarships, and general employment.

Kansas communities with unaccredited public schools could see property values decrease, businesses move to other locations, and so on. Quality (accredited) public schools are economic drivers.

Accreditation should be based on the district's ability to meet a certain level of educational standards. Determining accreditation should be the job of the Kansas Department of Education and the State Board of Education, not the legislature.

Please consider whether it makes sense for an entire student body and community to be punished if a school district were to have a misstep with any of our current or future laws on the books. Below are just a few examples:

- New open enrollment law that could be confusing in its implementation
- Law requiring at-risk funds be used on programs with a 5-year study, yet very few if any programs are studied for that long
- Laws passed in other states that could be considered in Kansas, such as prohibiting teachers from using a student's preferred pronouns

Missteps involving any of the above would have nothing to do with whether the district was meeting the academic needs of students. Yet students would lose out on opportunities and communities could see their economies crumble.

I urge you to vote no on bill HB 2612. But, should this bill move forward, I ask that:

- Private schools receiving our public tax dollars through the Tax Credit Scholarship program also be included under this law
- The legislature also follows all applicable laws and regulations, such as the one to fund 92% of excess special education costs

Respectfully, I hope that you can see that the punishment does not fit the crime under bill HB 2612.

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