From: Greg Kubler
To: K12 Budget
Subject: HB2738
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Chairperson Williams and K-12 Education Budget Committee Members,

I am writing to you in opposition to HB2738. Special Education services in Kansas are currently compromised by state and federal funding. I would invite the Committee members to come and observe our services and programs in Southeast Kansas to see for themselves the many difficulties our staff faces. We are seeing an increase in student numbers and also ever increasing intensity of issues. This is especially true for our pre-school and K-5 populations whose social-emotional and academic development was impacted tremendously by the past pandemic. Our services are a 'life line" for almost 2500 students in Southeast Kansas.

In many instances, our staff members are paid less than our regular education partners, or less than service providers can make in competing medical and private industry. As a result we are faced with multiple unfilled positions of classified and professional staff. The number of individuals entering education has rapidly dropped creating fewer candidates to replace our retiree's.

In an effort to recruit and retain staff, we increased salaries and are subsequently operating in a deficit of over $700,000 dollars. We have continued to increase our local district assessments yet have not been able to do so at a rate that has allowed us to keep up with expenditures. Since FY19, we have increased district assessments by just under $1 million dollars.

Although there are many ways to calculate funding, simply adding together all federal and state revenues for our Interlocal has resulted in our member districts carrying 30% of the total expenditures for special education.

After nearly 40 years of serving Kansas students, I find it deeply concerned that the critical supports and services we provide for our students will be significantly compromised by legislation that essentially reduces funding. I would ask that you deeply reconsider the needs of Kansas students across the state and fund education at a level that creates hope and promise for our most vulnerable students.

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