

February 13, 2024

Testimony to the House K-12 Education Budget Committee

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Bill No: HB 2738

Opponent

Written testimony only

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

I strongly oppose HB 2738, which is another thinly-veiled attempt to avoid fully funding special education (SPED).

As a parent of a current public school student, and a past recipient of SPED services in the Olathe School District, it is imperative that you fully fund special education as required by law.

Any attempts at altering the current method of calculating the State's share of SPED funding should be vetted by experts and stakeholders. This bill creates a completely new way of calculating funding without careful review or thoughtful consideration of its impacts.

The State must meet its obligation to fund 92 percent of excess SPED costs. School districts, the State Board of Education, and the Kansas Department of Education all recognize that special education has not been fully funded since 2011. The shortfall has grown to an estimated \$173 million.

HB 2738 provides no additional funding this year or in the future. This continued failure to adequately fund SPED hurts not just students that receive special education services, but all children in public schools. School districts are forced to transfer money and resources from general education funds to cover the shortfall.

A Special Education Task Force was created for the purpose of reviewing the current method of funding and determining if any changes are needed. Please vote no on HB 2738 and refer it to the Task Force for further review.

Additionally, please follow the phase-in plans proposed Governor Kelly or the State Board of Education to fully fund special education. Public schools are not truly fully funded until SPED is also fully funded.

Sincerely,

Kellie Bubeck

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