

February 13, 2024

Testimony to the House K-12 Education Budget Committee

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BILL NUMBER: HB 2738

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB 2738.

Kansans want special education fully funded and fully funded by honest and accurate means. This includes a true review by experts. A special task force was created, yet never utilized. When you continue to not fully fund special education, you are impacting district budgets and the ability to support the needs of students. We have many top-ranked districts in our state and people are choosing to move to Kansas for our public education system. Fully funding special education is a key component to our public schools!

Any attempts at changing the current method of calculating the state's share of special education 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.

It is time for the state to meet its obligation to fund 92% of excess special education costs. School districts, the State Board of Education, and the Kansas Department of Education all recognize that special education hasn't been fully funded since 2011. The shortfall has grown to an estimated \$173 million.

This bill provides no additional funding this year or in future years. Failure to provide adequate funding hurts all of our kids in public schools as districts must transfer money from their 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.

In the meantime, please follow the phase-in plans proposed by the Governor or the State Board of Education to fully fund special education. Our schools will not be fully funded until special education is fully funded.

Adrienne Newlin

Mom of two, small business owner

Overland Park