

Testimony in Support of HB 2136
Presented by Dr. Lorenzo Rizzi- Parent and Catholic School Administrator

IN PERSON PROPONENT-(Kirsten Wondra) testimony in favor of HB 2136. AN ACT concerning education; relating to the tax credit for low-income student scholarship program; expanding eligibility therefor; eliminating the eligibility requirement that students shall have been previously enrolled in public school; increasing the tax credit for contributions made to such program; providing for aggregate tax credit limit increases under certain conditions; amending K.S.A. 72-4353 and K.S.A. 2024 Supp. 72-4352 and 72-4357 and repealing the existing sections.

TO: Madam Chair Rep. Estes and members of the House Education Committee

**FROM: Lorenzo Rizzi, Associate Superintendent, Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas
In Person Proponent- Kirsten Wondra- Associate Superintendent- Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas**

DATE: February 5, 2025

Dear Chair Estes and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2136. As both a parent and a Catholic school administrator, I am deeply invested in ensuring that every child in Kansas has access to the best possible education, regardless of their financial circumstances. HB 2136 is a crucial step toward expanding educational opportunities and empowering families to make the best choices for their children's future.

This bill includes two critical improvements to the existing scholarship tax credit program:

1. **Increasing the Cap with the Escalator Clause** – Last year, \$8.2 million of the available \$10 million was used to provide scholarships for students in need. By implementing an escalator clause, we ensure that as demand grows, funding can keep pace with the increasing number of families seeking educational opportunities outside of their assigned public schools. This provision will provide more low- and middle-income families with the ability to choose a school that best serves their child's unique needs.
2. **Raising the Tax Credit from 75% to 100%** – Encouraging donations to scholarship-granting organizations is essential for the success of this program. By increasing the tax credit to 100%, Kansas will be more competitive with neighboring Missouri, where donors already receive a full tax credit. This adjustment will help attract more contributions, particularly from donors in the Kansas City area, where many families could benefit from these scholarships.

The mission of this legislation aligns perfectly with the mission of Catholic education and all quality schools: to provide every child with the best possible education. As a school administrator, I see firsthand how access to scholarships changes lives. It allows students to thrive in environments that nurture their academic, moral, and spiritual development. As a

parent, I know how important it is to have the ability to choose a school that aligns with my values and best supports my child's growth.

HB 2136 is about fairness, opportunity, and putting the needs of students first. I urge you to support this bill so that more children in Kansas—especially those from low-income and working-class families—can receive the high-quality education they deserve.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the students and families of Kansas.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Lorenzo Rizzi

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lorenzo Rizzi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and a stylized 'R'.

Associate Superintendent

Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas