

## Testimony to the House Committee on Education

**NAME:** Donna Ackley

**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen, parent of 2 children

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** [your email address]

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** [choose one]

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

I am opposed to HB 2136. This bill would allow my tax dollars to go to a school that does not have state oversight and can deny admission to students for a variety of reasons.

I am also concerned about increase in the tax credit when people donate to this fund, this will decrease the amount of money that goes to the public schools as well as our state infrastructure. This move will benefit the wealthy and hurt regular Kansans.

Please vote NO on HB 2136

Donna Ackley

Lawrence, KS

## **Testimony to the House Committee on Education**

Kerry Adam  
Parent and concerned citizen  
Bill HB 2136 Opponent  
Written Testimony  
February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136. I have older kids that attended both public and private schools in the Kansas City area. I am a strong believer that public tax dollars should remain with our public schools.

The current tax credit of 75% is already a huge benefit for those people funneling their tax dollars to private schools. Increasing the credit to 100% seems as though it is special treatment and would hurt other nonprofit organizations that truly need the money.

A huge concern of mine is that there seems to be no real oversight or accountability. How do we as taxpayers know that these at risk students are receiving the scholarship?? Private schools have their own policies and procedures when admitting students. They are able to pick and choose who they accept.

Our public schools are the reason so many people move to Kansas. Let's not fix something that is not broken.

I would appreciate confirmation that this email has been received and added to written testimony.

Please oppose Bill HB 2136.

Kerry Adam  
Mission Hills, KS

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

There are so many reasons that this bill should not pass. These voucher programs aren't available to all. Public dollars belong to our public schools that accept and educate all children. Diverting our state general funds to private schools undermines public education funding.

Not only does this bill weaken our public schools but it reduces the tax dollars that are needed to maintain our roads and bridges. These tax credits are a hinderance to the state as a whole simply because the "donor" chose to funnel their money to a private school. I would like to see our state be more sensitive to the needs of all our citizens and not just the wealthy.

Please vote No on Bill HB 2136

Becky Anderson  
Leawood, KS

**Written Testimony on HB 2136  
Submitted to the  
House Education Committee  
Wednesday, February 5, 2025**

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB 2136, which seeks to expand student eligibility under the tax credit for low-income students scholarship program. Our concerns with this measure center on two key issues.

First, increasing the tax credits available to donors contributing to scholarship-granting organizations would effectively reduce state revenue—funds that are essential for supporting not only public education but also other critical public services, such as healthcare and infrastructure.

Second, the bill fails to address the lack of oversight and accountability for institutions benefiting from these scholarship funds. Without proper safeguards, taxpayer dollars could support institutions that do not monitor student performance adequately or meet the state accreditation standards established by this legislative body.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to oppose HB 2136.

Dr. Tiffany Anderson  
Superintendent  
Topeka Public Schools - USD 501

Jim Edwards  
Lobbyist  
Topeka Public Schools - USD 501

**NAME:** Sara Askew  
**TITLE:** Parent of public school children  
**EMAIL ADDRESS:** sarabrooke@gmail.com  
**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136  
**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent  
**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written Only  
**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

I attended private schools K-12, and started my kids at private school as well. I have three children. Two of them have attended both private and public school. My youngest has only attended public school. The private school my children attended prior to switching to Maize USD 266 could not meet their academic needs, nor were they required to by law. Public education has absolutely been the answer for my kids. The current scholarship program still has room for eligible students to take advantage of it; it does not need expanded at this time. And enlarging the pool of eligible students will take away spots from the families who need the scholarships the most. At a time when special education is not fully funded, the legislature's focus should be on fully funding public education, not diverting funds to pay for private schools. Good public schools increase the value of our properties. If our public schools suffer, our home values will suffer as well. And no Kansans want that. Funding those schools will raise all Kansans, by improving our communities and helping the majority of students and families that attend them.

In closing I ask you to vote no on bill HB 2136.

Thank you,  
Sara Askew  
Wichita

## **Testimony to the House Committee on Education**

**NAME:** Judi Barkema

**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen and Taxpayer

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** jabarkema@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written Only Testimony

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

As a parent of two Shawnee Mission West High School graduates, I know the value public schools provide. Public schools are a key resource for success as individuals and as a state.

### **Public tax dollars belong with public schools**

Tax dollars should be used to strengthen public schools that serve everyone instead of giving tax dollars to families making a private school choice.

### **Private schools are not available to all, private schools get to choose who to accept**

Funneling our tax dollars to private schools that pick and choose which children to serve is a poor use of funds. Tax credits proposed in this bill do not provide real choice.

### **Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy**

The proposed tax credits will give refunds to families and these families will not contribute funding towards public efforts (including roads) that we all use. If I don't use the library, can I get tax credits to pay for books I buy?

### **No oversight or accountability**

Tax dollars should not go to private schools and home schools that have no oversight. With no oversight, what standard is there for a quality education?

### **Impact on rural areas**

The proposed tax credits will drain public school resources across the state, including rural areas that have little or no private school options. This means rural areas will subsidize private school tuition for metro areas.

Please vote NO on HB 2136.

Judi Barkema

Kansas Citizen and Taxpayer

Lenexa

**From:** [Erica Benson](#)  
**Cc:** [Susan Estes](#); [Kyle McNorton](#); [Jerry Stogsdill](#); [Sherri Brantley](#); [Shawn Chauncey](#); [Linda Featherston](#); [Jason Goetz](#); [Scott Hill](#); [Steve Huebert](#); [Silas Miller](#); [Lon E. Pishny](#); [Louis Ruiz](#); [Rebecca Schmoie](#); [Mark Schreiber](#); [Megan Steele](#); [Valdenia Winn](#); [Dawn Wolf](#); [House Education](#); [Mari-Lynn Poskin](#); [Stephanie Clayton](#)  
**Subject:** Please do not advance House Bill 2136 – Expansion of Tax Credit Scholarship Program  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 4, 2025 9:07:24 AM

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Good evening,

Thank you for considering the opposition testimony regarding the impact of school voucher tax credits on public education and state tax policy. I would like to highlight the fact that there is no evidence and have been no studies to prove that this tax credit scholarship is even working or improving student outcomes (no oversight or data shared) to warrant expanding the program, the proposed changes to the tax credit scholarship program allow for private schools to not need to select at-risk students enrolled in the public schools for the scholarships, and this program already poses risks to the state general fund which impacts our public education system. *Why is this body spending so much time inventing new ways for the wealthy to avoid paying taxes, especially when 92% of Kansas families rely on our public schools?*

One of the most concerning shifts in education policy in recent years has been the growing movement to privatize the nation's K-12 education system through the expansion of state-funded school vouchers. A key driver of this trend is the use of state voucher tax credits, these tax credits reimburse individuals and businesses for contributions made to organizations that provide tuition vouchers for private schools. Unlike traditional charitable giving, these credits allow taxpayers—often wealthy individuals and corporations—to recoup the full amount of their "donation," effectively redirecting tax dollars away from public education.

Rural students and communities are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options. The Tax Credit Scholarship program primarily benefits those in urban areas of our state. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka.

Before recent IRS regulations were implemented, private schools and financial advisors openly marketed these credits as a way to generate financial gain, with some organizations encouraging donors to “make money” by stacking state tax credits with federal charitable deductions. While the IRS has taken steps to close this loophole, new tax avoidance strategies have emerged, including the use of the federal business expense deduction in conjunction with state tax credits, further exacerbating the diversion of public funds to private institutions.

Recent data obtained from tax agencies in Arizona, Louisiana, and Virginia

underscore the inequities of these programs. In each of these states, more than half of all voucher tax credits are being claimed by families with annual incomes exceeding \$200,000. This reality directly contradicts the argument that these programs primarily serve low- and middle-income students. Instead, they function as a tax shelter for high-income earners while undermining the funding base of public education.

**Our tax dollars should not go to private schools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children. There are no controls in place to ensure eligible at-risk students who apply for a scholarship are granted one, as private schools are allowed to set their own admission standards. And there are no controls in place to ensure those who do receive scholarships receive a quality education. Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars.**

To address these concerns, I urge the committee to consider the following policy solutions:

Repealing voucher tax credits – These credits serve no legitimate public purpose and disproportionately benefit the wealthiest taxpayers at the expense of public education.

Preventing tax avoidance – If outright repeal is not feasible, states should adopt reforms to ensure that contributions made under these programs do not qualify for federal business expense deductions or other tax benefits that result in profit-making. Illinois has already implemented such a provision, which could serve as a model for other states.

Ensuring transparency and accountability – States should require comprehensive reporting on the income distribution of credit recipients and the financial impacts of these programs on public education funding.

Ultimately, the best way to ensure a fair and sustainable public education system is to maintain strong public investment in our schools rather than incentivizing the redirection of public dollars to private entities. I urge this committee to carefully consider the implications of voucher tax credits and take decisive action to protect public education.

Thank you for your time and consideration, please do not advance House Bill 2136.

Erica Benson  
Parent and teacher



## Testimony to the House Committee on Education

Kristen Blackton

Private Citizen

krosekauf@gmail.com

HB 2136, Expanding eligibility under the tax credit for low-income students scholarship program

**Opponent**

Written-Only Testimony

February 5, 2025

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the chance to provide testimony. My name is Kristen Blackton, and I am the parent of a young daughter who is currently enrolled in the De Soto School District (USD 232). I am writing today to voice my **opposition** to HB 2136.

As a former educator, I am uniquely acquainted with the importance of fully-funded schools in our community. Public schools are vital to educating **all** students in our state, and their contributions go far beyond just educating the future. They are a public good that is instrumental to a successful society. Our public tax dollars should be reserved for funding our public schools.

HB 2136 would expand the amount of the tax credit for low-income students private school scholarship program to 100%. It is my understanding that there is no other tax credit in the state of Kansas that is 100% for charitable donations; therefore, I find it curious that this particular tax program gets this designation. What makes this program more worthy than thousands of other non-profits working hard for people across our state? I must conclude that this is, once again, a means to de-fund our public schools by diverting funds from the State General Fund that supports public services, including our excellent public schools across the state.

Furthermore, there is no need to expand this program when there are thousands of students who are eligible under the current guidelines who are not utilizing the program. Instead of helping low-income students, this bill would be a way for wealthy donors to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. I encourage you to shift your attention to fully-funding special education in our public schools rather than providing tax credits for private schools and their donors.

Public tax dollars belong in public schools. I urge you to vote **NO** on HB 2136.

Thank you for your time,

Kristen Blackton

Shawnee, KS

## **Testimony to the House Committee on Education**

**NAME:** Elizabeth Hunter-Blank

**TITLE:** Kansas Private Citizen

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** ehunterblank@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written testimony only

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

I am opposed to school vouchers. They will take away funding from our public schools. We should be investing more money into our public schools so that each student in our communities can have access to a good education. They say “the children are our future”.

I do not personally have any children but have always been happy to pay my taxes to help support the schools so my neighborhood children could have access to really good schools.

I am asking you to please vote no on bill HB 2136]

Elizabeth Hunter-Blank

Private tax paying citizen

Mission Hills, KS (Johnson County)

**HB 2136 Opposition Testimony**

**Senate Education Committee**

**February 3, 2025**

**Jessica Bright, Jessica.lauran28@gmail.com**

**Parent in Olathe School District - USD 233**

Chair Estes & members of the committee,

Thank you for your service and taking the time to read the public's testimony. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB 2136.

As a lifelong Kansan, I chose to stay in Kansas to raise my own family in large part due to our outstanding public schools.

I had the privilege to receive an excellent education through the Blue Valley School District and am now watching my seven-year-old thrive in the Olathe School District. Everyone who lives in the Kansas City metro area knows that Kansas schools are far and away the best in the area. They are the reason our property values are consistently higher and homes in the area are more sought after.

HB 2136 jeopardizes this stellar reputation. By diverting general fund dollars to private schools, we would be robbing not only our public schools, which 90% of Kansas children attend, but also our roads and highways (which are again, a benchmark of excellence in the area).

We have the benefit of hindsight with this bill. Multiple states have implemented similar bills and have seen not only their public education funding suffer, but they have also not reported growth in private education enrollment. This means these tax refunds are not being used to enroll additional children in private schools, they are simply providing a tax break for people wealthy enough to already be enrolled in these schools.

I am asking you to vote no on bill HB 2136 so that Kansas schools so that Kansas schools continue to excel.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Jessica Bright

Olathe

## **HB 2136**

### **Testimony to the House Committee on Education**

**NAME:** Kathryn A Briscoe

**TITLE:** Beloit , Kansas

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** kathy\_b\_239@yaoo.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY**

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

I do not feel this bill would be in the best interest for the children living in rural areas of the state of Kansas. I encourage you to vote NO on this bill

Kathryn A. Briscoe  
Beloit, Kansas

Hello. I am writing today as a lifelong lover of education, a late-in-life graduate degree-holding special educator, and a mother of two whose passion lies in ensuring equity in education. School choice is a misnomer presented as a gift to all. I ask you to please consider the inequities that will absolutely befall YOUR constituents' children and the ultimate irreparable damage to our public education system, not to mention contributing to an already dismal tax status if SB75 passes.

**DISCRIMINATION:** Vouchers are useless to a family who is unable to transport and who is unable to make up the difference in tuition costs. The reality is that the districts who, on paper, could benefit from such a "gift" are actually the ones whose residents would not be able to benefit.

**CONTINUED CLASS SEPARATION:** Vouchers will (and have, as has been demonstrated in other states that have failed in implementing them) provide families who can afford private school to receive, in essence, a discount. These are families who have already made the decision to part from public school, who have made the decision to send their children to schools that can choose who attends and who does not, who have chosen to separate their children from a general populace that promises richness in diversity.

**MORE DISCRIMINATION:** As has been demonstrated in other states that have attempted this practice, students with disabilities lose all protections provided by IDEA. This harkens back to a time when children were sent to institutions and forgotten if they had differences that educators didn't know how to educate.

**LESS ACCOUNTABILITY:** As has been demonstrated in every private school, educators are not held to the same standards that public school educators are. The lower standards here shout hypocrisy: we want the best for our students (at least I hope you do), and yet, we will continue to expect less of those educating them.

I love my job. It is by far the most difficult one I have ever had, and yet, every day, I have the opportunity to teach others how to be more accepting of those with disabilities. These lessons extend far beyond the classroom when we see our students caring for those who have less, for those who look different than they do. This job is made possible because the public schools have resources (albeit continuously dwindling). Continuing to gut a system that has the responsibility to educate YOUR future - to prepare your caretakers when you are unable to care for yourself, to plant seeds of exploration for those who will research protocol for your cancer treatment, to ensure we have adults capable of ensuring our economy does not fall into the depths of a depression that will cause you to lose things you hold dear promises a society that will continue to descend into one unable to progress.

Please, for the love of all that is right and just, be responsible to the majority of your tax-paying constituents. Focus your efforts on better equipping the schools that are already doing the work and doing it with far less than they should have to.

**NAME:** Janice Brunks

**TITLE:** Grandparent of Shawnee Mission School District Students

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** jmbrunks@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written Only

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

Vouchers divert public tax dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions. It is imperative that those tax dollars are spent funding our public schools. A good education for all Kansas children is instrumental to our future. Without educated Kansans our state will falter and become less able to compete for good paying jobs. Without quality education we lose out on keeping teachers, doctors, scientist, and the list goes on, in our state.

Please vote no on bill HB 2136.

Janice Brunks

Olathe, KS

February 3, 2025

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

Kellie Bubeck

[Kellie.bubeck@gmail.com](mailto:Kellie.bubeck@gmail.com)

Parent in the Shawnee Mission School District

HB 2136

**OPPONENT**

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Hearing Date: February 5, 2025

Dear Chair Estes & Members of the Committee:

I am writing to voice my opposition to HB 2136. I was born and raised in Olathe, Kansas, and am fortunate to have attended Olathe public schools for my entire education. The quality education I received in Kansas public schools provided the foundation for my life, including my pursuit of higher education.

I am now an attorney and mother of three children, all of whom will attend Kansas public schools. I request that you please vote no on HB 2136 because it will hurt public education and reduce the opportunities for other children in the state to receive a quality public education.

HB 2136 will divert public tax dollars to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the \$173 million shortfall in special education funding. The state should fully fund special education, not private schools. Using public taxpayer dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning.

Public tax dollars are for the public good. It is no coincidence that many young couples who live in Kansas City, Missouri move to Kansas once they start having children because of the high-quality public schools.

We also need to consider the long-term implications of this bill. If we are not funding our public schools appropriately, we will have a generation of less-educated citizens, which affects us all.

In addition, this bill will disproportionately affect rural students as there are few options for private schools outside of the Kansas City metropolitan area. Private schools pick and choose who they accept. Public schools accept all students.

Quality public schools benefit more than just families with children. They increase our property values. Without quality public schools, fewer individuals will be inclined to move to Kansas, which will ultimately result in a smaller tax base for the state.

Furthermore, HB 2136 lacks oversight and provides no review process to evaluate how students are utilizing our taxpayer dollars at private or home schools. Taxpayer dollars should require the same oversight and transparency as our public schools. Continued research demonstrates that private school vouchers do not improve student achievement.

I respectfully request that you vote no on HB 2136. This bill will negatively impact not only students, but all Kansans.

Sincerely,

Kellie Bubeck

[Kellie.bubeck@gmail.com](mailto:Kellie.bubeck@gmail.com)





Laurel Burchfield

Mainstream

Laurel@mainstream.vote

HB 2136 - Expanding student eligibility under the tax credit for low income students scholarship program

Opponent

February 5, 2025

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony for House Bill 2136 on behalf of Mainstream.

**Mainstream OPPOSES HB2136.** This proposal is an attempt to divert funds from public schools to benefit those who make the choice to enroll their children in private, often religious, schools. **This diversion of public funds is another state-sponsored attempt to undermine public schools and favor private, often religious ones.**

HB2136 is an expansion of a program beyond its original intent to serve low-income students. Already, the program has been expanded to include students with higher income levels (up to 250% of the federal poverty level which is above the KS median household income). Even before that expansion, only a small percentage of eligible students (approximately 0.5% in 2023) have applied for and received these so-called “scholarships.” HB2136 would now expand it even further to include students who have never attended a Kansas public school. **No other state program would receive such a push for expansion so quickly with these results.**

Not only does HB2136 expand student eligibility, but it also increases the tax credit from 75% to 100%. Wealthy donors can essentially get a complete tax write-off for their contributions to a program that only a very small percentage of Kansas students participate in. **These are dollars that should be going to the state general fund which funds public goods, such as public education, and not back into the pockets of wealthy individuals.**

Public schools are accessible to and held accountable by all Kansans. Proposals like HB2136, and other tax credit and voucher programs, benefit those families who choose to enroll their students in private or home schools. These institutions often have limited or no accountability, can discriminate against potential students during the enrollment process, and center religious teachings – and do so at the expense of our general fund and public school funding. This is bad for our schools and for our students who do not fit into specific religious world views.

Kansas residents represent a plurality of religious beliefs and practices, and under the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, we are protected from our government essentially funding religious institutions. Recent court cases around vouchers continue to

dissolve this fundamental principle of our country's founding, and **HB2136, with its inclusion of students who have never attended public school as beneficiaries, is pushing even harder at this wall with the intent to fully break it down.**

HB2136 essentially mandates that Kansas residents participate in the diversion of tax dollars away from public schools and into often religious institutions, making Kansans now donate or tithe to churches to which they don't belong.

**It also promotes a very specific view of the world that can be based on narrow, extremist religious teachings that don't represent the beliefs of many people of faith.** Three of the most popular US textbooks and curricula used by Christian schools and homeschools have been shamed publicly for the way they teach things like science and history. At one point, an Accelerated Christian Education or ACE textbook, taught that the Loch Ness monster is real, and a modern day dinosaur as proof of creationism. These text books have taught that slavery was "black immigration", that Native Americans are savages, primitives, or demon worshipers, as well as presenting negative views of the LGBTQ+ community, non-Christians, and others. Since private schools are not held to the same expectations and standards as public schools, even if students in Kansas are not being taught these things, there's no protection against it and no way to stop it.

While our public schools have been fighting to increase graduation rates, the CEO of ACE has said "graduation is important, but salvation is more important." **That is not the purpose of education.**

For these reasons, Mainstream opposes HB2136 and we strongly urge you to reject this expansion of this program beyond the scope of its original intent.

Thank you,

Laurel Burchfield  
Mainstream

**NAME:** Amy Carter  
**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen and Parent  
**EMAIL ADDRESS:** carteam17@yahoo.com  
**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136  
**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent  
**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written Only  
**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Dear Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

As a proud parent of children in the Olathe School District and as someone who understands the value of our public schools to an educated society and to the vitality of our communities, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

It is not clear why we are funneling very LARGE tax credits to wealthy individuals who choose to donate to funding of private schools versus those who donate to other nonprofits. Expanding the already generous tax credit to 100% allows these wealthy taxpayers to completely avoid paying taxes in the state of Kansas.

I can't believe this needs to be stated but we should not be reducing state revenues by providing tax credits that funnel money to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve, and are not held to the same accountability standards as our public schools. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that provide oversight for our tax dollars. We should not be expanding this program that already funnels taxpayer dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions. This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a personal choice to receive a religious or other non-public education.

With all the talk of fiscal responsibility, granting even larger tax credits and breaks to wealthy Kansans does not make sense for the long-term viability of our state's budget and current surplus position. If representatives really want to direct some of the surplus back to their constituents, this targeted tax credit benefiting the wealthiest Kansans certainly does nothing for the majority of Kansans. In fact, rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka.

I urge you to vote no on bill HB 2136.

Amy Carter  
Concerned Kansan  
Overland Park, KS

## **Testimony to the House Committee on Education**

**NAME:** Christie Carter

**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen, Parent of a Student, Business Owner

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** ctant@mac.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written only testimony

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

As a parent who has chosen private school for the majority of my child's education, I have always supported public school and have had no issue with my tax dollars going toward public education. It is in every Kansans best interest to have a well-educated population. This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a personal choice to receive a religious or other non-public education.

In closing, I ask that you vote no on bill HR 2136.

Christie Carter

Overland Park, KS

**NAME:** Amanda Chappell

**TITLE:** Kansas Public School Parent & Volunteer

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** mandichappell@yahoo.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** written

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

It is not the job of the state to provide funding for private schools. The state's job is to provide a high quality public education system that all Kansans have equal access to. If citizens then CHOOSE to not utilize that system which has been offered to them, that is their choice; but it is not the responsibility of the state to compensate them for that choice. We should be leading the nation in public schools, we need to divert MORE money into educating our future leaders, not less.

In closing, I ask that you vote no on bill HB 2136. Save our public schools, improve our public schools, help us build up Kansas' future leaders and make this a place they want to stay and raise their families.

Best regards,

Amanda Chappell, concerned parent & public school proponent

Prairie Village, Kansas

## **Testimony to the House Committee on Education**

**NAME:** Lesa Childers

**TITLE:** Kansas citizen and parent of two children attending public schools

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** lgalehodge@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** written only

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

Thank you in advance for reading my testimony. I am a parent of a child with an IEP enrolled in the Shawnee Mission School District. This bill would divert tax money to private schools that have no requirement to serve students with disabilities. In fact, the vast majority of private schools are not at all equipped to serve students with significant support needs, and they **will** refuse admission to those students. I am a parent of a student with significant support needs. Even if I wanted to take advantage of this program, I would NOT be able to, because there is no school in the state of Kansas that would accept my child. How do I know this? I know this because I am a former private school teacher, and I witnessed how heartbreaking it was to see families have one child accepted to the school, and the other sibling rejected on the basis of disability.

Even if she were allowed, most of those schools are religious schools, specifically Catholic, and I would be a fool to enroll my child, who is already extremely vulnerable to sexual abuse, in any institution that is frankly dangerous for children. A 2023 report released by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation identified 188 clergy in the state “suspected of committing various criminal acts,” including aggravated criminal sodomy, rape, aggravated indecent liberties with a child and aggravated sexual battery. This is during a period going all the way up to 2022. These were crimes that were covered up by the dioceses – a pattern we have seen all over the United states. My child cannot reliably report sexual abuse. I would never, ever put her in this situation.

Our tax dollars should absolutely not be funneled into any religious institution, but especially those that have been proven to be criminally negligent in the protection of children.

We should not be reducing state revenues by providing tax credits that funnel money to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve.

Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind.

Our tax dollars should not go to private schools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children.

There are no controls in place to ensure eligible at-risk students who apply for a scholarship are granted one, as private schools are allowed to set their own admission standards. And there are no controls in place to ensure those who do receive scholarships receive a quality education. Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars.

Please show you care for your most vulnerable constituents by voting no on bill HB 2136.

Lesa Childers

Merriam, KS

## **Testimony to the House Committee on Education**

**NAME:** Anna Clark

**TITLE:** Leawood resident

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** aclark320@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** written

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

Please keep public funds in public education. Kansans have always had the choice to send their children to public, private or home school. Public schools are open to everyone. However private organizations can refuse anyone for any reason. That would mean Public funds not being used toward the general public with the use of vouchers. It is deceptively called "school choice". When in reality it is the schools that you are allowing to choose their students. I am against this. My tax dollars do not go towards private organizations. Please consider. Tank you for your time.

Anna Clark

Leawood Resident



**Mary Coffman**  
**Private. Citizen**  
**Mary Coffman maryo.coffman@icloud.com**  
**HB 2136 Opposition Testimony**  
**Opponent**  
**House Committee on Education**  
**February 3, 2025, 2025**

Chair Estes & Members of the committee,

Date: January 27, 2025

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 2136. I write to express my strong opposition to this proposed legislation, which I believe would severely undermine the public education system in Kansas.

As a retired executive who doesn't have children, I've always been proud to support public schools. I firmly believe that tax dollars should be used to fund public education.

HB 2136 would divert critical public tax dollars away from public schools and allocate them to private institutions that lack oversight, accountability, and equitable admissions practices. These tax credits disproportionately benefit wealthier families who already have the means to afford private education while draining essential resources from public schools that serve the majority of Kansas students, including those most in need.

**Key Concerns:**

**1. Harm to Public Education:**

Kansas public schools rely on consistent funding to provide quality education, hire and retain excellent teachers, and maintain infrastructure. Diverting funds to private schools through vouchers would weaken our public schools, leaving vulnerable students with fewer opportunities.

**2. Tax Inequity:**

The proposed \$8,000 tax credit would create a significant tax windfall for families opting out of public schools. A family with three children could claim \$24,000 in credits far exceeding typical private school tuition costs. This unfairly uses public dollars to subsidize private education for a small percentage of families, creating an unnecessary financial burden on all taxpayers.

### 3. Lack of Oversight and Discrimination:

Private schools receiving voucher funds are not held to the same accountability standards as public schools. They are free to deny admission based on factors such as religion, academic performance, or behavior. Public dollars should not support institutions that do not uphold inclusive and equitable access for all students.

### 4. Long-Term Community Impact:

Redirecting resources to private institutions erodes the collective investment in public education, a cornerstone of our democracy. Strong public schools benefit all Kansans, creating an educated workforce and vibrant communities. Public dollars belong in public schools, not in unregulated private institutions.

HB 2136 is not a solution to the challenges facing Kansas education. Instead, it would exacerbate inequities, harm public schools, and misuse taxpayer dollars. I urge you to reject this bill and focus on strengthening public education, which serves every child, regardless of background or income level.

I strongly encourage you to vote No on HB 2136.

Thank you for your consideration. I respectfully request that my testimony be added to the record in opposition to HB 2136.

Sincerely,

Mary Coffman

Overland Park

## **Testimony to the House Committee on Education**

**NAME:** Colleen Connor

**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen and parent

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** cconnorkc@gmailcom

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written Only

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

Hello. I'm a parent who sent 2 kids through the Olathe Public School system. I am a big supporter of our public schools and strongly oppose voucher plans in Kansas. School vouchers or scholarship tax credits divert necessary monies from our public schools to unregulated private schools and individuals. I do not support any voucher plans for our schools. I ask you to not support voucher plans in any way, shape, or form introduced in the legislature during this session. Public money belongs in our public schools.

I ask you to vote no on bill HB 2136.

Thank you,

Colleen Connor

Lenexa, KS

## Testimony to the House Committee on Education

**Name:** Rebecca Cohenour

**Title:** Johnson County resident and parent/grandparent of children in and who graduated from Shawnee Mission USD 512

**Email Address:** spudgirl80@gmail.com

**Bill Number:** Bill HB 2136

**Proponent, Opponent, or Neutral:** Opponent

**Oral or Written Only Testimony:** Written-Only

**Date of Hearing:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this issue. I am writing to voice my **opposition** to bill HB 2136.

A well-educated public is essential for a successful society. Vouchers take money from public schools and society will suffer as a result.

Following are just a few of the troubling points in this bill (there are many more):

- There is no guarantee that all schools/entities which receive voucher funding provide a solid education for students. Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars!
- Private schools clearly benefit from public dollars but can discriminate in their admission policies.
- Rural areas and families without private school options will pretty much be subsidizing families in more densely populated areas of the state. Their public schools suffer from reduced funding.
- Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will divert even more funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education, to subsidize the private choices of some parents and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas.
- This program already allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors. Increasing the tax credit to 100% provides special tax treatment to those who choose to donate through this program that funds private schools versus those who donate to other nonprofits.

In closing, I urge you to reject HB 2136. Public dollars belong in public schools that are accountable to taxpayers. Society as a whole will benefit.

Rebecca Cohenour  
Lenexa, Kansas

## **Testimony to the House Committee on Education**

**NAME:** Erin Dahl

**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen, teacher

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** edahl@kcai.edu

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written Only

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

This bill will expand the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program that already exists in Kansas; it will expand the program beyond its original intent, which was to provide low-income (at-risk) students with an opportunity to attend a private school. Like other voucher programs, this program diverts public tax dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to deny admission for any number of reasons.

Ultimately, this bill incentivizes its use as a tax avoidance scheme that can bring big benefits to corporations and the wealthy while reducing the state general fund used to fund our public schools, maintain our roads and bridges, and more.

This bill allows these groups to exploit loopholes in the tax system, diverting crucial public funding away from public schools that serve the majority of students. Instead of investing in equitable education for all, this bill would create a system where the rich have greater access to resources while leaving underfunded public schools to struggle. We need policies that prioritize funding and supporting public education, not enriching private interests at the expense of our children's future.

As a teacher, I will face the reality of my students and I being negatively impacted by this bill. I ask that you please vote no on HB 2136.

Erin Dahl

Kansas Citizen and teacher

Roeland Park, KS

## Testimony to the House Committee on Education

**NAME:** Molly Dopheide

**TITLE:** Kansas citizen and parent whose children graduated from Kansas schools

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** molly.dopheide1.8@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136. I fail to see the value of this measure to me as a constituent. It simply moves money from the State to the wealthiest people in Kansas. Despite offering 'scholarships' to the underprivileged, rural, and special needs students private schools have not successfully lured them to their programs. In fact many Kansas counties don't even have private schools. This leaves the most expensive students relying on public education and those of us not taking advantage of the private education responsible for the greater costs.

It is my belief that universal public education is one of the greatest strengths of our country. Its benefits extend beyond my family and its well-being. Everytime I go to shop, a literate person assists me in my purchases, everytime I visit a hospital, literate people care for me, everytime I hear a song or watch a movie, literate people entertain me. This is what a public education system does. Our public education system is the foundation of this. Please don't underfund it any more.

Please vote no on bill HB 2136,

Thank you for your consideration,

Molly Dopheide

Leavenworth, KS

Testimony to the House and Senate Committees on Education

From: Gretchen Eick, PhD

Oppose expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship Program; support public schools

[eickgc@gmail.com](mailto:eickgc@gmail.com)

HB 2136/SB 87

Opponent

Written

HB 2136/SB 87 are tax avoidance mechanisms for the superrich. Those donating up to half a million dollars to the Tax Credit Scholarship program receive a tax credit of 75% of their donation. For the largest donations, our state's coffers are reduced by \$375,000. These bills expand that to 100% tax credit for donors, i.e., for a \$500,000 donation, the donor can take \$500,000 off what they owe in taxes—a dollar for dollar benefit to rich donors and an incentive to them to undermine public schools.

In Kansas our private schools educate a small fraction of our population. This Tax Credit Scholarship in 2023 went to only 1,340 students in Kansas despite the fact that more than a quarter of a million Kansas students were eligible for it. **Expansion is clearly not needed.** This program, particularly with this bill's expansion, hurts Kansas kids by incentivizing a switch to public schools. Public schools are the lifeblood of democracy. They need full government support and not government undermining them.

Please do not continue augmenting the incomes of the 1% and removing resources that should go to the .0058%.

Vote down these bills, please.

Dr. Gretchen Eick, PhD

lifelong educator in public schools,

at Friends University, and

at Wichita State University

2/3/25

1536 N Park Place

Wichita, KS 67203

[eickgc@gmail.com](mailto:eickgc@gmail.com)

**From:** [ksu\\_the\\_best@hotmail.com](mailto:ksu_the_best@hotmail.com)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Vote against HB2136  
**Date:** Monday, February 3, 2025 6:46:10 PM

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I do not believe that taxpayer money, collected in part for PUBLIC schools, should go to private schools who do not have to follow the law in regards to accepting and serving students with disabilities, for example.

This "scholarship" program, with a 100% tax credit rebate, does exactly that.

Furthermore, these types of programs in other states have been shown to especially hurt rural schools, which is many schools in Kansas.

Is there any type of charitable donation/savings that Kansas offers 100% matching tax credit for? This just seems like a way for the state to fund private schools - again, schools that do not have to follow the IDEA.



## **Testimony to the House Committee on Education**

**NAME:** Jennifer Fankhauser

**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen, parent of 2 school-aged children

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** jenniferstuartdesign@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written only

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

As a parent of a 3rd grader and Pre-K student, I am very concerned about the negative impact this bill would have on our state's public education system. Our tiny town of Madison, KS has only 1 public school. There is no school choice here. We need all of our public resources to be invested into the public schools that serve the community and students in our town and other small, rural Kansas communities like ours.

I urge you to reject bill number HB 2136 and instead prioritize funding and policies that support and improve public education. Please stand with our students, teachers, and communities by ensuring that public tax dollars remain dedicated to public schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your commitment to serving our state and hope you will oppose this harmful legislation.

Jennifer Fankhauser

Madison, KS

## **Testimony to the House Committee on Education**

**NAME:** Danielle George

**TITLE:** Parent in USD 230

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** dvoorhees24@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written only testimony

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

I am a parent in USD 230 with a 1st grader in public school. We moved to our area specifically for the school and the community within the school district because we felt it would be the best fit for our child. Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind. Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program to private school students leaves fewer spots for the at-risk students the program was intended to help, which would include my child who utilizes several programs not offered through private education. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that provide oversight for our tax dollars. We should not be expanding this program that already funnels tax payer dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions. Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education. Rural students and communities, which includes the vast majority of Kansas students, are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.

In closing I urge you to vote no on bill HB 2136 to keep education equitable for all Kansas children.

Danielle George

Spring Hill KS

**NAME:** Sherry Giebler

**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen, EdS, LPC

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** sherry.giebler@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

**Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,**

I am writing to express my deep opposition to HB 2136.

With 32 years of experience as a Kansas public school teacher, counselor, and adjunct professor, I have dedicated my life to serving students and families across our state. I have seen firsthand the power of a strong public education system—how it opens doors, lifts communities, and gives every child, regardless of background or income, a chance to succeed. Public education is the foundation of our state's future, and our children deserve our full investment, free from political division.

I do not support vouchers or Tax Credit Scholarships because they siphon public tax dollars away from public schools—schools that welcome and educate every child. These programs lack oversight and accountability, and they disproportionately benefit a select few at the expense of the broader student population. Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will further drain critical resources from our public schools, while also allowing donors to avoid contributing their fair share of taxes to Kansas. This bill redirects money that could strengthen our public schools—schools that serve all children—into private institutions that can pick and choose their students.

As an educator, I have personally witnessed families enroll their children in private schools, only to return to public schools within weeks when they realize that private institutions are not always equipped to meet their needs. Unlike public schools, private schools do not have to follow the same accountability and transparency standards. Public schools are held to rigorous state regulations, ensuring that students receive a quality education and that taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly. Private schools, however, operate by different rules, and the public has no way of knowing whether their tax dollars are truly benefiting Kansas children.

This bill also fails to consider our rural communities. Having taught in Western Kansas, I know firsthand that rural taxpayers will ultimately be subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas like Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka. Instead of investing in education systems that benefit all Kansas children, this bill diverts funding toward private choices—choices that should not come at the cost of our public schools and the students they serve.

I urge you to stand with Kansas families and public schools. Please vote NO on HB 2136.

**Sherry Giebler, EdS, LPC**

Olathe, KS



**HB 2136 Opposition Testimony**

**Written Only**

**Committee**

**February 3, 2025**

Joan T. Gilson, PhD [Writerslife2012@gmail.com](mailto:Writerslife2012@gmail.com)

Retired Teacher, Grandparent and Parent, Shawnee Mission School District 512, Private Citizen

I am writing to ask that you not proceed with action on HB 2136, a measure to further expand the tax credit scholarship to private schools. This bill drains funds from Kansas public school systems, schools which are already experiencing strained budgets as a result of unfunded special education programs.

Special education, which is only provided in limited form in Kansas private schools, is now mandated by Federal statute and will be for the foreseeable future. These programs require careful management of tax funds and strict budgeting in order to ensure these students receive appropriate education and training in order to become contributing members of society.

Private schools have neither the mission nor means to address these requirements. Diverting tax dollars into private school budgets will be a misguided legislative act at the expense of Kansas taxpayers, who are already suffering under inflation and who need strong public school systems.

The economic health of Kansas is the most compelling reason not to expand tax credits. Thriving, well supported public school systems have been shown repeatedly to support local and state-wide economic development and job growth.<sup>1</sup> Public schools are engines of prosperity.<sup>2</sup> However, research overwhelmingly indicates that taxpayer-funded vouchers have had a pronounced negative effect on student achievement, and student achievement is the basis of a strong local and state economy.<sup>3</sup>

Please send confirmation that my testimony been received and added to the relevant conferee list. Thank you for your service to the people of Kansas. I realize that legislative work is often a time consuming, thankless job, and we appreciate your thoughtful approach to the task of supporting Kansas and Kansans.

Sincerely,

Joan T. Gilson, PhD

13850 W. 91<sup>st</sup> Ter. Apt. 512D

Lenexa, KS 66215

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<sup>1</sup> "Linking Education Policy to Labor Market Outcomes." (2008) Fasih, Tazeen. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank.

"Public Education Expenditures, Taxation, and Growth: Linking Data to Theory." Blankenau, William F. et al. (May 2007) American Economic Review, pp. 393-397.

<sup>2</sup> "Pennsylvania's Best Investment: The Social and Economic Benefits of Public Education." Mitra, Dana. Pennsylvania State University.

<sup>3</sup> "7 Lessons About School Vouchers From The Privateers Greene, Peter. (Oct 31, 2024) Forbes <https://www.forbes.com/sites/petergreene/2024/10/30/7->



**NAME:** Amy Schrumpf-Goode  
**TITLE:** Parent to two children in KS public schools  
**EMAIL ADDRESS:** amyjsgoode21@gmail.com  
**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136  
**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent  
**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written  
**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136. I have two children in the public school system (which is already underfunded, thanks to Republicans) so it seems ignorant to me to pull more money away from these students. This will create a hugely negative impact, especially in smaller towns (who have the voters you rely on). I am a recipient of 12 years of Catholic school and I can tell you that my education wasn't as good as it would have been, should I have attended public school. The private schools don't have the same oversight, the teachers don't have as good of credentials and education so everyone loses when you pass these bills. Except for the rich. They will save money and likely will donate more to your campaigns. It's not lost on me how this negatively affects most of your constituents, but helps you. I haven't even gotten started on how this will negatively affect the budget. How will you replace the lost tax money? Proposing this bill is irresponsible and ignorant.

I request confirmation that my testimony has been received and added to the relevant conferee list.

I request that you vote no on bill HB 2136.

Amy Schrumpf-Goode  
Parent  
Overland Park, KS

Testimony to the House Education Committee  
**Opponent**, Written-only  
**House Bill 2136**  
**Expansion of Tax Credit Scholarship Program**

Hearing Date: February 5, 2024

by

Erin Gould

erinlgould@gmail.com

Resident of Roeland Park, Kansas and parent of public school graduates

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee;

I am a Kansas resident and proud parent of three public school graduates. I am writing today because I believe this committee should stay focused on ensuring that Kansas public schools – which must welcome and serve every Kansas child – remain the focus of this committee. I am opposed to this bill and any other that seeks to harm children and financially undermine public schools as this one does.

### **There Is Harm**

#### *Fiscal Harm*

There are some who say that because this program doesn't take money *directly* away from the General Fund or because it is money that the state *never received* in the first place it is somehow not taking money away from the state so there is no fiscal harm. This is a particularly cynical and self-serving view which deliberately ignores the fact that tax credits are a significant reduction in a tax bill and therefore a significant reduction in state revenue that would otherwise be received and spent on public education and other services.

#### *Harm to Children*

Voucher programs encourage the dismantling of public education by bribing Kansans with tax relief to remove their children from public schools and place them in private schools. Our Kansas public schools are publicly accountable and have layers of oversight to ensure children are safe and that they receive a fact-based, dogma-free, quality education. Private schools in Kansas, on the other hand

- are not subject to public oversight
- can have bigoted and discriminatory selection processes
- can teach objectively false information
- may promote religious dogma
- may be staffed by unqualified persons.

Allowing millions in tax dollars to evaporate by offering tax credits to families for private school choices without any mechanism to ensure the selected private educations meet minimum state standards for curricula, educational progress, and safety is a dereliction of this committee's obligation to protect Kansas children and ensure all Kansas children receive a quality education.

### **Where Does the Costly Program End?**

It strikes me that this year's version of the bill is larger than previous years' both in the credit percentage and the number of children eligible to participate. How big will we let this program get? This year's version increases the cap, increases the tax credit percentage to 100% and includes more categories of applicants. It is clear that growing the program is the plan, not solving a specific education problem. The more kids that qualify, the easier it is to justify raising the cap. While \$20 million may seem an expendable amount today, what is to keep the legislature from raising the cap to \$50 million or \$500 million? What happens when the cost of



this second, poorly regulated, education funding mechanism becomes a financial burden to the state? Will you cut the program or will you attack public education costs and strip even more from our public schools? Why do you want to create two competing education systems that results in both a funding and quality crisis? Arizona is a perfect example of how this will end – ballooning education costs, poorer educational outcomes, angry citizens.

Public schools are one of Kansas' strengths. If this committee sees room for improvement in Kansas public schools, then please work to make those improvements so all Kansas children can benefit and thrive. Do not continue this effort to strip schools of children and resources. Families wanting an educational experience outside the public schools should always have that option to do so. However, I urge you to remember **it is not the obligation of the state to fund or financially reward private choices** made in lieu of public services and to **vote NO on this bill**.



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KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Timothy R. Graham  
Director of Government Relations & Legislative Affairs  
Written Testimony – Opponent  
House Committee on Education  
House Bill 2136  
February 5, 2025

Chairperson Estes, members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to HB 2136.

Kansas NEA is a member-driven organization that represents all 40,000 educators in the state of Kansas. We have nearly 22,000 members. The positions we advocate for have been proposed, debated, and adopted by several hundred members that were selected by their peers to attend our annual Representative Assembly.

Our members have a strong stance on vouchers that is quite clear. The first part of that resolution reads:

*Kansas NEA believes that voucher plans, tuition tax credits, or funding formulas that have the effect of financing private education with public funds, undermine support for public schools. Such programs could lead to racial, economic, and social isolation of students and weaken or destroy the public school system.*

**The Low-Income Student Scholarship Program is a voucher program that diverts public funds to private schools.**

The KNEA resolution on vouchers continues to state:

*KNEA acknowledges that it is the right of parents/guardians to choose to send their students to private schools...*

*...KNEA further believes that any private school or agency that receives public funding through voucher plans, tax credits, or other funding/financial arrangements must be subject to all accountability measures and regulations required of public schools.*

HB 2136 does not ensure that private schools that receive public funds are held to the same standards as public schools. As a matter of fact, HB 2136 doesn't require any language regarding accountability, measurement, licensure, accreditation, assessment, or service requirements. The omission of such language is another reason that KNEA opposes this bill.

In closing, the most painful part for teachers when talking about such bills is the rhetoric seems to follow them. These proposals always appear to be predicated upon the assumption that public schools and, in turn, public school teachers are not thriving to meet the needs of Kansas children. This is not the case.

We ask the committee to oppose HB 2136.

## Testimony to the House Committee on Education

**NAME:** Lynn Hardy

**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen for 40+ years and parent

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** LynnGHardy@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written only testimony

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

First, I want to thank you for your service and dedication to Kansas and your diligence in considering what is best for our GREAT STATE.

I am writing to voice my opposition to HB2136. In considering this Bill, I want to express my dissatisfaction because I have a daughter who grew up in KS schools and now serves at a Professor at the University of Texas in the School of Social Work. My daughter and SO MANY THOUSANDS of other young adults have had so much success in life BASED ON their experience in the PUBLIC School System in KS. When I moved to Kansas City from Texas in 1983, I specifically chose to live on the Kansas side of the state line BECAUSE of the schools. My daughter received, I believe, a BETTER, more well-rounded education because she went to PUBLIC SCHOOL.

In KS, we do not have mountains, oceans or year-round warm weather to draw people to our state. What we do have is EXCELLENT PUBLIC EDUCATION. PLEASE do not pass Bill HB2136. It will put our state in jeopardy in more than one way in the future!

### **Public tax dollars belong with public schools:**

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate **all** children and that are **accountable to taxpayers**.
- Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program.
- This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice

- Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans who choose not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education that is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

#### **Private schools are not available to all, private schools get to choose who to accept**

- We should not reduce state revenues by providing funding for families to funnel that money to **private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve.**
- Families with children with **special needs, disabilities**, or those for whom English is not their first language will not benefit from these tax credits as few private schools can accommodate their needs.
- **Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind. Vouchers like this tax credit program do not provide real choice.**

#### **Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy**

- Families who can already afford the choice to send their kids to private school will benefit greatly, while funding for public schools and other state services pay the price.
- Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share.

#### **Public schools are a public good:**

- **Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools.**
- **A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society**, not just the individual students. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system.

#### **No oversight or accountability:**

- **Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children.**
- There are no controls in place to ensure those receiving these tax credits are providing the children with a quality education or any education at all. Kansans expect accountability for how our tax dollars are being used.

#### **Impact on rural areas:**

- **Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.**
- These tax credits will primarily benefit those in urban areas of our state. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka.
- **Will we eventually just CLOSE our rural schools AND COMMUNITIES???**

For so MANY reasons...we must maintain our AMAZING KANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS! If not for our present-day children, for the future of our GREAT STATE! PLEASE, I implore you to consider all this information before casting a vote for HB2136. And VOTE NO.

Lynn Graves Hardy

Kansas Citizen for 40+ years

Resident of Leawood Kansas

**NAME:** Marcel Harmon

**TITLE:** Private Citizen and former School Board Member / President (USD 497)

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** [marcelharmon@gmail.com](mailto:marcelharmon@gmail.com)

**BILL NUMBER:** HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written Only Testimony

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to share my opponent testimony against HB 2136. My name is Marcel Harmon, and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2136.

Both of my kids attended public school (USD 497) with the youngest graduating high school in 2023. I'm a former school board member of USD 497. I have volunteered on local and state education committees and task forces for a large portion of my adult life, and as a consultant have spent a significant amount of time in public schools for most of my professional career. My parents were both public school teachers (my mom was also a grade school librarian). I know the value of public education to the state of Kansas and its importance to the vitality of our communities.

I have grouped my opposition points into the following topics.

**Expansion of the Tax Credit Scholarship Program:**

- Why does the program need to be expanded when there are still hundreds of thousands of students still eligible under the current guidelines who are not utilizing scholarships?
- Expanding the program to private school students will only take opportunities from the very students the Tax Credit Scholarship program was intended to help. *Instead of expanding, accountability should be added to the program to understand why these at-risk students aren't receiving scholarships.*

- Increasing the tax credit to 100%, by providing special tax treatment to the donors of this program, provides a greater incentive to funding private schools versus donating to other very worthy nonprofits. They should all be on an equal playing field relative to tax incentives.
- The current tax credit of 75% already is already a huge benefit to those choosing to funnel their tax dollars to private schools. Expanding the tax credit to 100% *allows these taxpayers, especially the wealthy, to completely avoid paying taxes in the state of Kansas.*

**Public tax dollars belong with public schools:**

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools primarily because a) they accept and educate ALL children (private schools can pick and choose which children they want to serve) and b) they are accountable to the taxpayers. Accountability is a critical part of spending public dollars, as many conservative legislators are fond of pointing out. Private and homeschools lack the oversight necessary to confirm whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children.
- Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship Program will divert even more funds from public education to subsidize private education, have the same negative impact as a voucher program. This diversion of funds harms public education along with the students served by public schools. This can be particularly harmful for our rural communities as their resources are drained, with little to no private options available. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for urban families.
- Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans who choose not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education (currently underfunded by \$173 million).
- Families with children with special needs, disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language will not benefit from this tax credit expansion as few private schools can accommodate their needs. And taking money away from public schools will make it harder for them to adequately meet the needs of these families and their students. This is extremely inequitable, negatively impacting many of those already struggling the most.

### **Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy:**

- Vouchers, tax credit scholarships, etc., take money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice. This program already allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors. Expanding the tax credit to 100% is even more egregious. *The Tax Credit Scholarship program, like most voucher programs, is welfare for the wealthy.*

### **Public schools are a public good:**

- A strong public education system benefits ALL of society, not just the individual students who make use of it. This is because public schools are a public service – a common pool resource – providing good quality education to EVERYONE, regardless of socio-economic status. A strong public education system ensures we have citizenry capable of maintaining our communities and society as a whole. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system and putting this critical common pool resource at risk.
- Each successive generation can also be viewed as a common pool resource because the continuity, success, and vitality of our communities, economies, and institutions depends on the success of each generation of students and our ability to educate and prepare them for the world. Because private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind in the process, they take away from that common pool resource society depends on.

### **Relevant Sources of Information**

The following are some relevant sources of information:

- [State and local experience proves school vouchers are a failed policy that must be opposed: https://www.epi.org/blog/state-and-local-experience-proves-school-vouchers-are-a-failed-policy-that-must-be-opposed-as-voucher-expansion-bills-gain-momentum-look-to-public-school-advocates-for-guidance/](https://www.epi.org/blog/state-and-local-experience-proves-school-vouchers-are-a-failed-policy-that-must-be-opposed-as-voucher-expansion-bills-gain-momentum-look-to-public-school-advocates-for-guidance/)



- [State Policymakers Should Reject K-12 School Voucher Plans:](https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/state-policymakers-should-reject-k-12-school-voucher-plans)  
<https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/state-policymakers-should-reject-k-12-school-voucher-plans>
- [School Vouchers: A Survey of the Economics Literature:](https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jel.20150679)  
<https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jel.20150679>
- [Summary of Research on School Vouchers:](https://education.indiana.edu/research/centers/ceep/education-policy/policy-briefs/2023/research-on-school-vouchers.html)  
<https://education.indiana.edu/research/centers/ceep/education-policy/policy-briefs/2023/research-on-school-vouchers.html>
- [Public dollars should fund public schools](https://www.ncpecoalition.org/) (from the National Coalition for Public Education): <https://www.ncpecoalition.org/>
- [Private School Choice: What the Research Says:](https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/private-school-choice-what-the-research-says/2024/10) <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/private-school-choice-what-the-research-says/2024/10>

Once again, I thank you all for reviewing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no on the passage of HB 2136 out of committee.

NAME: Amy Hinrichs  
TITLE: Kansas Citizen  
EMAIL ADDRESS: aloramy.hinrichs@yahoo.com  
BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136  
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent  
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written  
DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.

I believe the importance of providing all children with an education is vital to the success of this country and to democracy. Democracy is a government determined by its people. For the voters to guide and direct our country, all children need to have access to a quality education.

“American public education is one of the two foundational elements of our democracy. The other is the ballot itself,” says Derek W. Black, a professor at the University of South Carolina School of Law. According to the Christian Science Monitor, “...study after study has shown that the more education people have, the more they vote, and the more they participate in a nation's political life.” By redirecting funds from public schools to private schools, you are undermining public education and therefore the foundation of our democracy.

Public schools also teach democracy by bringing diverse people together in a shared space with the common goal of learning. Private schools, on the other hand, have the choice of taking a student or not. This often leaves out lower income, disabled, special needs, and those students for whom English isn't their first language.

Furthermore, our tax dollars should not go to private institutions without government oversight and accountability.

Again, I ask you to vote no on bill HB 2136.

Amy Hinrichs  
Olathe, KS

**NAME:** Rebecca Hoge

**TITLE:** Kansas citizen and parent of 2 children in public school

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** bechoge@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written Only Testimony

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my STRONG opposition to bill number HB 2136. I am a graduate of the Shawnee Mission School District, taught for 10 years in the SMSD, and now have two children attending school in the Olathe School District. I am also a substitute for the Olathe School District. Public education is something I am passionate about. Public education is the right of every American child and public tax dollars belong in public schools. Public schools accept and educate ALL students. This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids in our communities and gives it to families who have made a personal choice to receive a religious education or other private education. Tax credits should not be given to fund private schools, those schools should be funded by their members' tuition fees alone. The legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education. Many private schools do not accept, or can not provide, proper education for special needs students, and therefore should NOT receive public education dollars. Our public schools need smaller class sizes, they need to retain qualified teachers for elementary, middle and high school levels. Our public schools need education materials to meet the needs of ALL students. If we take away funding for public schools though larger tax credits for private schools, Kansas schools and Kansas children will suffer the consequences. Let the wealthy fund their own education if they so choose, but do NOT take away funds from the working class, lower income and at-risk children. My family is privileged and could afford a private education, but I will always choose and fight for public education. It is a basic right of the children in America. If our educational systems fail due to lack of funding, then we will have more than "first world" problems.

You must oppose and vote a resounding NO to HB 2136, the children of Kansas need you.

Rebecca Hoge

Parent, educator, and public school advocate

Lenexa, KS

**NAME:** Veronica Holtz  
**TITLE:** Kansas citizen, Andover School District Parent  
**EMAIL ADDRESS:** veronicaleeholtz@gmail.com  
**BILL NUMBER:** Bill HB 2136  
**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent  
**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** WRITTEN ONLY  
**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136. As an Andover Public School parent and a private school alumnus, I am adamant that tax dollars stay with our public institutions.

I understand how school vouchers sound like a great opportunity for Kansas students, but without proper limitations set within the program, they will not achieve their proposed benefits. Any economist can tell you what happens when you give a set of consumers an injection of funds, prices go up. Just ask parents in North Carolina. So now families who have always paid for private schools will continue paying basically the same, but public school dollars will be flowing to private institutions, many of which are affiliated with religious organizations. This flies in the face of separation of church and state.

Public schools are required to accept and accommodate all students within their district. Private schools do not have this same requirement. This means tax dollars would be funding institutions that aren't available to all. Also, what about all the children who do not live near any private schools, but their local school is being drained of funds at their expense

Again, I'm asking you to please vote NO on HB 2136. It is not good for Kansas kids!

Veronica Holtz  
Kansas Citizen and parent of two children in Andover Public Schools  
Wichita, KS



900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 600  
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212  
(785) 296-3203  
[www.ksde.gov](http://www.ksde.gov)

Danny Zeck  
District 1

Melanie Haas  
District 2

Michelle Dombrosky  
District 3

Connie O'Brien  
District 4

Cathy Hopkins  
District 5

Beryl New  
District 6

Dennis Hershberger  
District 7

Betty J. Arnold  
District 8

Jim Porter  
District 9

Debby Potter  
District 10

2/5/2025

## **Opponent Testimony for House Bill 2136**

House Committee on Education

Cathy Hopkins and Danny Zeck, Liaisons

Kansas State Board of Education

Chair Erickson and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony regarding House Bill 2136 on behalf of the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education voted to prioritize only using public funds for public schools in the Board's 2025 Legislative Priorities. House Bill 2136 is counter to this priority by providing funding that would otherwise be available for public schools to families that choose to enroll their children in private schools.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our testimony,

Cathy Hopkins

Danny Zeck

*Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.*

**HB2136 Opposition Testimony**  
**Written Only**  
**House Education Committee**  
**February 5, 2025**  
**John L. Hunt, jlhunt5245@gmail.com**  
**Private Citizen in Blue Valley School District 229**

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your service in support of all Kansans. I write today to ask you all to vote “no” on the advancement of Bill HB2136. I am opposed to the contemplated expansion of tax credits to 100% for contributions to private schools and the use of public funds to support private schools.

My education and much of my success stems from an excellent public school system. I believe the provision of vouchers or tax credits to parents who choose to utilize private schools undermines the long-term success of our public school system. I feel private schools are often faith based and narrow in their academic focus whereas a public education encourages critical thinking and a diversity of experience that forges a well-informed citizenry aware of wider societal options and challenges.

**Public tax dollars belong with public schools:**

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers.
- Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program.
- This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice.
- Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans choosing not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education that is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

**Private schools are not available to all, private schools get to choose who to accept**

- We should not be reducing state revenues by providing funding for families to funnel that money to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve.

- Families with children with special needs, disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language will not benefit from these tax credits as few private schools can accommodate their needs.
- Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind. Vouchers like this tax credit program do not provide real choice.

### **Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy**

- Families who can already afford the choice to send their kids to private school will benefit greatly, while funding for public schools and other state services pay the price.
- Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share.

### **Public schools are a public good:**

- For many benefiting from these tax credits, especially those with multiple kids, they will receive annual refunds and will contribute nothing towards the public goods in our state that all Kansans benefit from.
- **Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools.**
- A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system.

### **No oversight or accountability:**

- Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children.



- There are no controls in place to ensure those receiving these tax credits are providing the children with a quality education or any education at all. Kansans expect accountability for how our tax dollars are being used.

**Impact on rural areas:**

- Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.
- These tax credits will primarily benefit those in urban areas of our state. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka.

**So, respectfully, I ask you all to vote “no” on Bill HB2136. Public funds should NOT be used to support families that CHOOSE to abandon public education.**

Thank you,

John L. Hunt  
Overland Park, KS 66213  
jlhunt5245@gmail.com

**HB2136 Opposition Testimony**  
**Written Only**  
**House Education Committee**  
**February 5, 2025**  
**Kathryn A. Hunt, kahunt5246@gmail.com**  
**Private Citizen in Blue Valley School District 229**

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your service in support of all Kansans. I write today to ask you all to vote “no” on the advancement of Bill HB2136. I am opposed to the contemplated expansion of tax credits to 100% for contributions to private schools and the use of public funds to support private schools.

My education and much of my success stems from an excellent public school system. I believe the provision of vouchers or tax credits to parents who choose to utilize private schools undermines the long-term success of our public school system. I feel private schools are often faith based and narrow in their academic focus whereas a public education encourages critical thinking and a diversity of experience that forges a well-informed citizenry aware of wider societal options and challenges.

**Public tax dollars belong with public schools:**

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers.
- Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program.
- This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice.
- Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans choosing not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education that is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

**Private schools are not available to all, private schools get to choose who to accept**

- We should not be reducing state revenues by providing funding for families to funnel that money to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve.

- Families with children with special needs, disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language will not benefit from these tax credits as few private schools can accommodate their needs.
- Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind. Vouchers like this tax credit program do not provide real choice.

### **Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy**

- Families who can already afford the choice to send their kids to private school will benefit greatly, while funding for public schools and other state services pay the price.
- Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share.

### **Public schools are a public good:**

- For many benefiting from these tax credits, especially those with multiple kids, they will receive annual refunds and will contribute nothing towards the public goods in our state that all Kansans benefit from.
- **Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools.**
- A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system.

### **No oversight or accountability:**

- Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children.

- There are no controls in place to ensure those receiving these tax credits are providing the children with a quality education or any education at all. Kansans expect accountability for how our tax dollars are being used.

**Impact on rural areas:**

- Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.
- These tax credits will primarily benefit those in urban areas of our state. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka.

**So, respectfully, I ask you all to vote “no” on Bill HB2136. Public funds should NOT be used to support families that CHOOSE to abandon public education.**

Thank you,

Kathryn A. Hunt  
Overland Park, KS 66213  
kahunt5246@gmail.com

## **Testimony to the House Committee on Education**

**NAME:** Corliss Jacobs

**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen, Resident of House District 14

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** corlissjacobs@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** HB 2136

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY**

**DATE OF HEARING:** February 5, 2025

**Chair Estes & Members of the Committee:**

**I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136.**

**Public schools belong to us all. We don't pay taxes to educate *only* our own children; we pay taxes to educate *all* children. An educated citizenry is what makes our country great.**

Public money used to pay for religious school tuition means that I am being forced to support religious institutions, even though they may not express my beliefs. This is a major reason our Constitution separates church and state

HB 2136 has the potential to bankrupt our state in a few years. We can look at Arizona to see the desperate situation vouchers can cause. This so-called scholarship tax credit is very enticing for large corporations who want the schools and other public services to transition to profit-making businesses. This bill increases the tax credit for donors to 100% with a \$20 million program cap. Since tax credits are dollar for dollar, passage of this bill will allow \$20 Million to be removed annually from our mutual state funds. And I think this bill allows for the maximum to be increased each future year.

Public funds belong to all of us, and we pay our taxes with the expectation that they will be used for the common good; for example, even though I personally will never drive on all the highways in Kansas, they are essential for the functioning and prosperity of our state. Allowing and encouraging public tax funds to be diverted to private institutions will gradually cause our state services to deteriorate.

**Please vote NO on HB 2136**



**From:** [Joan Jacobson](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** House Bill 2136  
**Date:** Monday, February 3, 2025 6:37:07 PM

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Re: House Bill 2136

My name is Joan Jacobson

I am a resident of Overland Park Kansas. Both of our children attended public schools, and I am a former high school teacher and school counselor of 30 years in the Shawnee Mission School District.

My e-mail address is [sojacobs@aol.com](mailto:sojacobs@aol.com)

I oppose passage of House Bill 2136

Written testimony

Hearing February 5, 2025

Chair & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 2136

Having worked the majority of my life in public schools, I am well acquainted with the importance of maintaining the highest financial support of these institutions. Families whose children attend these schools know the high degree of competence of the professional staff, and the continual scrutiny of the educational goals and content of every class that public school students attend. The availability of classes for those students who require additional support in special education is a valuable asset that private schools often do not have available to their students. Also, private schools do not require their professional staff to have the strict degree requirements demanded by public schools. Moneys taken away from public education robs students of the benefits the breadth and depth this education can provide. Attending school with a larger and greater variety of students enriches them and makes them better citizens. Please oppose HB 2136, which provides financial support for those who chose not to partake in the many benefits a public school education affords our children.

Please vote NO on HB 2136

Joan Jacobson

Former public school educator of 30 years

Overland Park, KS

## **Testimony to the House Committee on Education**

From: Jennifer Juhl Jarrell, public school parent and lifetime Kansan  
jarrellville@gmail.com

RE: HB 2136

### **OPPONENT**

Written Testimony

**Hearing Date:** February 5, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee:

Kansas public schools are one of our state's greatest assets. I **oppose HB 2136** and encourage the Kansas Legislature to stop spending its taxpayer-funded time working against our children's public schools. It is never acceptable to divert our taxpayer dollars to private, exclusive schools that often teach religion, can discriminate against students for any number of reasons, and are not accountable to public oversight.

Efforts to expand the Kansas Tax Credit "Scholarship" voucher scheme are yet another attack on public education in our state.

Please vote NO on HB 2136.

Additionally, please confirm that my written testimony has been received and added to the conferee list. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Juhl Jarrell  
14404 Falmouth St.  
Leawood, KS 66224  
913-579-7164  
jarrellville@gmail.com





# KANSANS FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

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Opponent Written Only Testimony on HB 2136  
Expanding student eligibility under the tax credit for low income students scholarship  
program.

House Committee on Education

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

By Ben Jones

thejembones@gmail.com

Representative of Kansans for Excellence in Education

Chair Estes, Vice-Chair McNorton, Ranking Minority Member Stogsdill and members of the House Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opposition testimony on HB 2136 on behalf of Kansans for Excellence in Education.

We oppose this legislation in that we see this as a back-door way to pass a full blown voucher system in Kansas at the expense of public schools. Increasing the tax credit from 75% to 100% and doubling the permanent cap from \$10,000,000 to \$20,000,000 reduces the revenue available for the state to fund public education and siphons those funds to private schools. When school districts are starved of funds to educate students who require special services, it hurts every public education student and local community.

Kansans for Excellence in Education, which is a non-partisan group supporting the success of all students, believes public dollars, even in the form of tax credits, should be invested in our public schools, and not be siphoned off to private schools, which can pick and chose which students they accept and are not overseen in the same way that legislators have demanded public schools be overseen.

Rural areas will be especially hard hit as funds desperately needed for districts that cover huge swaths of land, but smaller populations, can see budget cuts when the SGF is being starved of funds. The \$20,000,000 cap is greater than the overall operating budgets of districts the size of Girard and Hugoton. Apart from USD 457 Garden City, the 20 largest USDs by square mileage all have total operating budgets below \$20,000,000 to put this cut into the SGF into perspective.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2136.



**HB 2136 Testimony (Opposition, Written)**  
**House Committee on Education**  
**February 5, 2025 Hearing**

**Hilary Junk**  
**KS Resident**

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I write in opposition to HB 2136 as it is fiscally irresponsible for the state to, through tax credits, assume additional expenditures that were previously covered by private sector spending. The bill is stretching beyond its original intent to support low-income families; with the proposed expansion, the committee is creating an entitlement that neglects your fiduciary duty that transparency accompanies the collection and spending of tax dollars.

**Concerns about the bill's philosophy:**

Choosing not to engage with a public service does not mean that one is entitled to the monies that support that public good.

- The state park near me is not to my liking, but there are private country clubs near me. Can I claim a tax credit that may be larger than my tax assessment and receive a refund from the state to pay for private club dues? **No.**
- I disagree with the Kansas Attorney General's use of time and resources to pursue cases restricting voting practices when there is no material evidence of voter fraud. Can I claim a tax credit for my tax dollars that fund the Attorney General's Office because we don't share the same "values"? **No.**

Opting out or disagreeing with a public good does not mean I am entitled to monies that support public goods and services.

**Concerns about the bill's logistics:**

- **Program expansion is ripe for abuse by tax-avoiders:** In economic terms, tax credits are incentives. This bill's promise of a dollar-for-dollar reduction in a taxpayer's tax liability and expansion of the income limit extend a benefit meant for low-income families to higher-income families. "Donors" funnel money to private schools and are reimbursed in full by the state.
- **No data:** I appreciate that there are stringent guidelines for how tax funds are spent. If dollars that were going towards a public good are directed to a private entity, most reasonable people would expect for the standards and reporting would be equivalent. There are no such mechanics in this bill. How will we know if the program is "successful"? Trust, AND verify.

**Concerns about the bill's impact:**

- **Transference of tax burden from rural to suburban areas:** Given that over half of Kansas counties do not have a single private school, it's highly likely that this bill would supplement the Kansas families who already pay private tuition in more populated areas like the Wichita metro area and Johnson County.

My professional success in the finance and investment management industry is a testament to the high-quality public education I received. After 15+ years working at hedge funds and asset managers, I know full well that transparency and oversight are vital parts of prudent fiscal policy. HB 2136 lacks a way to assess if taxpayer dollars credited and thus diverted to private or home schools are being used properly or measured.

I respectfully request that you vote no on HB 2136. Please do not create a financial entitlement and neglect your fiduciary duty to Kansas students, 90% of whom benefit from our public education system. Transparency should accompany the collection and spending of tax dollars.

Sincerely,  
Hilary Junk

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