



KANSANS FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

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

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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.

