

February 3, 2025

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Joy Smith

TITLE: Parent of students in Shawnee Mission School District, PTA member

EMAIL ADDRESS: jlandgraf2@hotmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 2136

HEARING DATE: February 5, 2025

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written-only

Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Estes & members of the committee,

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

I am a parent of two students who currently attend our local public elementary school. Our children have flourished in their school. Due to covid restrictions and the fact that I was undergoing treatment for cancer at the time, our daughter entered kindergarten in 2021 with very little preschool and we were concerned she would fall behind. Thanks to fantastic teachers and a supportive environment she has thrived both socially and academically. Our school community is so important to us and has offered great support to us over the years.

Protection of our funding for our public schools is paramount to preserve and maintain the safe and desirable communities that we want to have in Kansas. Public schools are the cornerstones of many communities, particularly those in rural areas, and tax credits of the nature of those proposed will only serve to erode our public education system.

These tax credits ultimately divert tax dollars away from public education and result in less funding for things that have been proven to work to create strong schools. Additionally, this bill could result in private schools and home schools receiving even more tax dollars that are subject to no public oversight. Private schools may employ uncertified teachers and home schools have no curriculum requirements. I can't think of any greater disservice to our community, the state of Kansas, or our country as a whole, than passing a bill such as this which has the potential to further weaken the public school system.

There is no need for expansion of the current program as there are still hundreds of thousands of eligible students under the current guidelines. Additionally, increasing the tax credit to 100% provides special tax treatment versus those who donate to other non-profits and the current tax credit already provides a lucrative benefit to those who choose to fund private schools.

I urge you to please oppose **HB 2136**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joy Smith
Overland Park, KS