

February 3, 2025

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

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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

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