

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