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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.