

Chairperson and Committee Members,

As a mother of four, born and raised in Liberal, Kansas, I am honored to share my testimony with you today. I have the privilege of serving as the admissions director at a private school in Shawnee, Kansas, where I meet families daily who are searching for the best learning environment for their children.

Since August, I have met with 81 families exploring school options for their children. While many of these families are financially secure, that is only part of the story. Of the 81 families, 39 have expressed that financial assistance would be essential for their child's enrollment. These are not families seeking extra benefits; many are single parents, grandparents on fixed incomes raising their grandchildren, and foster or adoptive parents working hard to provide stability for the children in their care.

I am grateful to be part of an organization committed to diversity—not just in academics, abilities, and backgrounds, but also socioeconomically. One-third of our 625 students receive some form of tuition assistance. In 2024, our school awarded over \$400,000 in tuition assistance, all of which is provided by private donors.

What continually surprises me in my conversations with families is that their concerns are rarely about academics. Instead, they are most often focused on behavior issues in classrooms and the feeling that they are being shut out of their child's education. One parent, a single mother from Kansas City, Kansas, transferred her second grader from a public school in January because her child, who had once loved school, had become anxious and scared due to the erratic behavior of other students. Fortunately, this mother was able to transfer her child because we were able to offer generous tuition assistance, making this transition possible for her family.

School choice is about more than just reallocating funds from one system—it's about empowering families with the ability to choose the right school for their child. It's about opening doors for hardworking parents who are desperate to find the right fit but lack the financial resources to make it a reality. I urge lawmakers to consider the real faces behind this issue and support policies that make high-quality education accessible to all families, not just those who can afford it.

Sincerely,
Brooke Krause