

House of Education Committee

Kerry Adam

Parent and concerned citizen

Bill SB 87 Opponent

Written Testimony Only

March 10th, 2025

Dear Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. I have older kids that attended both public and private schools in the Kansas City area. I am a

strong believer that public tax dollars should remain with our public schools.

The current tax credit of 75% is a huge benefit for those people funneling their tax dollars to private schools. I believe it would hurt other nonprofit organizations that truly need the money.

A huge concern of mine is that there seems to be no real oversight or accountability. How do we as taxpayers know that these at risk students are receiving the scholarship?? Private schools have their own policies and procedures when admitting students. They are able to pick and choose who they accept.

We should not be sending public dollars to private schools; especially when our special education needs funding. Our public schools are the reason so many people move to Kansas. Let's not fix something that

is not broken.

I would appreciate confirmation that this email has been received and added to written testimony.

Please oppose Bill SB 87.

Testimony to the House Committee on Education
NAME: David Allen
EMAIL ADDRESS: DMA@SOUND.NET

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: WRITTEN ONLY
DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

Public education is one of the most important and valuable assets in our government and society. I had four children who benefited greatly from their public education. Public education is already marginally funded and cannot withstand any cuts to its funding. None of its funding should be diverted to private, often religious schools.

I oppose SB 87 and I implore you to vote no on SB 87.

David M. Allen
11065 W 175th St.,
Overland Park, Kansas 66221

Becky Anderson

I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 87. I have a Daughter in Law that teaches special education and a granddaughter that is also a teacher in the Blue Valley School District. They struggle now to have the supplies they need to teach, and many times purchase items themselves as do many dedicated teachers. To strip them of the money needed to educate the majority of children in the public schools is unacceptable.

Instead of diverting money to private schools we should be fully funding special education. This program allows for tax avoidance especially for the wealthy donors. The Tax Credit Scholarship program, like most voucher programs, is welfare for the wealthy.

Most children in Kansas go to public schools. Shouldn't we be looking out for the well-being of the majority? I know if you truly care about the children in Kansas you will not vote for a bill that takes away a good education for our children.

Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools. Most people who opt to send their kids to private schools have plenty of money to pay for that choice. And it is a choice. Private schools are not available to all.

NAME: Jason Anderson
TITLE: Kansas citizen and business owner
EMAIL ADDRESS: jason@jayscott.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written
DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB87, which seeks to expand the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program in Kansas. This bill fundamentally misaligns the original intent of the program, which was designed to provide vital educational opportunities specifically for low-income, at-risk students attending the state's lowest-performing public schools.

The expansion proposed by SB87 would open the program to an even broader range of students, including those whose families do not meet any income requirements. This shift undermines the original purpose of the program and diverts essential public tax dollars to private schools that operate with minimal oversight. These institutions have the discretion to deny admission for various reasons, leaving vulnerable students without access to education.

Moreover, the previous expansions of this program have already diluted its effectiveness. The income limit was increased to 250% of the Federal Poverty Level, allowing families with substantial incomes—up to \$80,375 for a family of two—to benefit from a program that was meant to assist those who truly need it. Currently, there are still over 233,000 students eligible for the existing Tax Credit Scholarship program who qualify for free and reduced lunch, indicating a significant number of at-risk students still requiring assistance.

The financial implications of this proposal are equally concerning. By increasing the program cap from \$15 million to potentially \$25 million and offering tax credits that benefit corporations and wealthy donors, we risk further diminishing the funding available for our public schools. This diminishes the resources allocated for essential programs, such as special education, at a time when our schools are still striving to meet the needs of all students.

I urge you to consider the negative impact that expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will have on the Kansas education system. We must prioritize equitable access to education for our most vulnerable students rather than diverting funds to those who do not need it.

Please oppose SB87 and protect the integrity of our public education system for the benefit of all Kansas children.

Sincerely,

Jason Anderson

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Amy Ashlock

TITLE: Kansas parent and taxpayer

EMAIL ADDRESS: akashlock@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

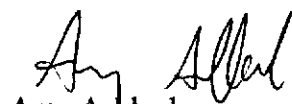
I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

Expansion of the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program will divert desperately needed funds away from public schools. The focus should be on fully funding special education. The focus should not be on sending more public tax dollars to private schools that lack accountability and oversight or on providing tax credits to the wealthy.

As a parent of two children in Kansas public schools, a public school volunteer, and the daughter and sister of three educators, public education is exceedingly important to our family. As a Kansas taxpayer, I do not support my tax dollars being stripped from public schools to expand this tax credit. I do not support my tax dollars being funneled to wealthy donors through tax credits. These public tax dollars should be used for public schools, including fully funding special education.

Please vote no on bill SB 87.

Thank you for your consideration.



Amy Ashlock
Lenexa, Kansas

NAME: Sara Askew
TITLE: Parent of public school children
EMAIL ADDRESS : sarabrooke@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only
DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

I attended private schools K-12, and started my kids at private school as well. I have three children. Two of them have attended both private and public school. My youngest has only attended public school. The private school my children attended prior to switching to Maize USD 266 could not meet their academic needs, nor were they required to by law. Public education has absolutely been the answer for my kids. The current scholarship program still has room for eligible students to take advantage of it; it does not need expanded at this time. And enlarging the pool of eligible students will take away spots from the families who need the scholarships the most. At a time when special education is not fully funded, the legislature's focus should be on fully funding public education, not diverting funds to pay for private schools. Good public schools increase the value of our properties. If our public schools suffer, our home values will suffer as well. And no Kansans want that. Funding those schools will raise all Kansans, by improving our communities and helping the majority of students and families that attend them.

In closing I ask you to vote no on bill SB 87.

Thank you,
Sara Askew
Wichita

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Julie Ball, jballboys1@gmail.com

TITLE: Patron of Shawnee Mission School District, Private citizen and Employee in Blue Valley School District

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, OR NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the C

I appreciate the time you are serving Kansas citizens. Today, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 87.

My sons attended Shawnee Mission School District, and I have been an elementary school counselor in Blue Valley School District for twenty years. I am familiar with the public school system. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools. Vouchers and education tax credits divert the funds that could be used to improve public education. This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our schools. The legislature should be using tax dollars to fully fund special education that is currently underfunded. Private schools are not available to all, private schools get to choose who to accept. Public school is available to all students. Families with children with special needs will not benefit from these tax credits since private schools do not accept and cannot accommodate these types of students.

Please vote no on bill SB 87.

Thank you,

Julie Ball
Overland Park, KS

Testimony to the House Education Committee

NAME: Judi Barkema

TITLE: Kansas Citizen and Taxpayer

EMAIL ADDRESS: jabarkema@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

As a parent of two Shawnee Mission West High School graduates, I know the value public schools provide. Public schools are a key resource for success as individuals and as a state.

Public tax dollars belong with public schools

Tax dollars should be used to strengthen public schools that serve everyone instead of giving tax dollars to families making a private school choice. The legislature should not be diverting public dollars to private schools when special education is underfunded.

Private schools are not available to all, private schools get to choose who to accept

Funneling our tax dollars to private schools that pick and choose which children to serve is a poor use of funds. Tax credits proposed in this bill do not provide real choice.

Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy

The proposed tax credits will give refunds to families and these families will not contribute funding towards public efforts (including roads) that we all use. If I don't use the library, can I get tax credits to pay for books I buy?

No oversight or accountability

Tax dollars should not go to private schools and home schools that have no oversight. With no oversight, what standard is there for a quality education?

Impact on rural areas

The proposed tax credits will drain public school resources across the state, including rural areas that have little or no private school options. This means rural areas will subsidize private school tuition for metro areas.

Please vote NO on SB 87.

Judi Barkema

Kansas Citizen and Taxpayer

Lenexa

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

Ashley + Eric Barlow

Kansas citizens, parents, concerned citizens

ashsbarlow@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written-only testimony

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Opposition to SB 87

Dear Chair Estes and members of the committee,

As a concerned Kansas parent and taxpayer, I strongly oppose SB 87 and urge you to vote against its passage. This bill expands the Tax Credit Scholarship program, diverting public dollars away from public schools to subsidize private education.

Public tax dollars should remain in public schools—institutions that serve all children, regardless of ability, background, or income, and that remain accountable to taxpayers. Private schools, by contrast, are not held to the same transparency and accessibility standards. They are not required to accept every student and operate with far less public oversight. Expanding this program would further deplete the resources available to the vast majority of Kansas students who attend public schools, including those with special needs and those in lower-income communities.

At a time when special education funding remains inadequate, it is irresponsible for the legislature to prioritize tax credits that benefit private institutions over fulfilling our commitment to fully funding public education. Every Kansas student deserves access to high-quality education, yet this bill shifts resources away from public schools, making it even more difficult to provide essential services and support.

Additionally, this bill disproportionately benefits families in urban areas, such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka, while leaving rural communities behind. Many rural families have no access to private schools, yet their tax dollars will be funneled into scholarships for students in areas where private school options exist. Meanwhile, rural public schools—often the backbone of small towns—will continue to struggle with underfunding.

Beyond the financial inequity, this program lacks sufficient oversight and accountability. There are no guarantees that scholarships go to the students who need them most, nor is there evidence that these funds are improving educational outcomes. Kansans deserve transparency in how their tax dollars are spent, and SB 87 moves us in the wrong direction.

Rather than diverting public resources to private institutions, our focus should be on strengthening the public schools that serve the vast majority of Kansas students. I urge you to oppose SB 87 and stand in support of policies that prioritize public education, accountability, and equitable opportunities for all children in our state.

For these reasons—and many more—I ask you to VOTE NO on SB 87.

Ashley + Eric Barlow
Kansas citizens, parents, concerned citizens
ashsbarlow@gmail.com

March 7th, 2025

Testimony to the House Education Committee

NAME: Alex Benson

TITLE: Chief Executive Officer, Bardavon

EMAIL ADDRESS: alexjbenson@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: SB 87 Education Opportunity Tax Credit

HEARING DATE: March 7th, 2025

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Please consider this letter my written testimony opposing SB 87. The bill expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program already exists in Kansas, the legislation is unnecessary but also damaging to public schools. We do not need vouchers diverting our public tax dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions, while our public schools accept and educate all children. A few supporting points I'd like to include:

Expansion of the Scholarship Program – The bill broadens eligibility for the tax credit scholarship program, allowing more students, including those who were not previously enrolled in public schools, to receive funding for private school tuition. This could divert funds away from public schools.

Increased Tax Credits – The bill increases the tax credit percentage for contributions to scholarship-granting organizations, eventually reaching 100%. This incentivizes businesses and individuals to direct tax dollars away from public education, reducing the overall revenue available for public schools.

Potential for Increased Funding Drain – By raising the total allowable tax credit limit from \$15 million to potentially \$25 million, more public funds are redirected to private schools, further straining the financial resources of public schools.

Reduced Accountability – Private schools receiving these funds are not held to the same standards of accountability, transparency, and oversight as public schools, potentially leading to disparities in educational quality and equity. While the bill aims to support low-income students, it does not guarantee that private schools will accept all students or provide the same level of support services that public schools are required to offer, such as special education programs.

Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options. The Tax Credit Scholarship program primarily benefits those in urban areas of our state. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka

Thank you,

Alex Benson
Overland Park, Kansas

March 6, 2025

Testimony to the House Education Committee

NAME: Erica Benson

TITLE: Parent of students in Shawnee Mission School District, PTA Board Member, and teacher

EMAIL ADDRESS: ericawbenson@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: SB 87 Education Opportunity Tax Credit

HEARING DATE: Feb, 6, 2025

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Distinguished Chair & members of the committee,

Thank you for considering the opposition testimony regarding the impact of school voucher tax credits on public education and state tax policy. I would like to highlight the significant risks these programs pose to the integrity of our public education system and to advocate for policy solutions that prevent tax avoidance and protect public funding.

One of the most concerning shifts in education policy in recent years has been the growing movement to privatize the nation's K-12 education system through the expansion of state-funded school vouchers. Originally rooted in efforts to preserve school segregation and racial inequality, the so-called "school choice" movement is being aggressively advanced in numerous states as a mechanism for diverting public dollars into private and religious schools.

A key driver of this trend is the use of state voucher tax credits, these tax credits reimburse individuals and businesses for contributions made to organizations that provide tuition vouchers for private schools. Unlike traditional charitable giving, these credits allow taxpayers—often wealthy individuals and corporations—to recoup the full amount of their "donation," effectively redirecting tax dollars away from public education.

Before recent IRS regulations were implemented, private schools and financial advisors openly marketed these credits as a way to generate financial gain, with some organizations encouraging donors to "make money" by stacking state tax credits with federal charitable deductions. While the IRS has taken steps to close this loophole, new tax avoidance strategies have emerged, including the use of the federal business expense deduction in conjunction with state tax credits, further exacerbating the diversion of public funds to private institutions.

Recent data obtained from tax agencies in Arizona, Louisiana, and Virginia underscore the inequities of these programs. In each of these states, more than half of all voucher tax credits are being claimed by families with annual incomes exceeding \$200,000. This reality directly contradicts the argument that these programs primarily serve low- and middle-income students. Instead, they function as a tax shelter for high-income earners while undermining the funding base of public education.

Our tax dollars should not go to private schools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children. There are no controls in place to ensure eligible at-risk students who apply for a scholarship are granted one, as private schools are allowed to set their own admission standards. And there are no controls in place to ensure those who do receive scholarships receive a quality education. Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars.

Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options. The Tax Credit Scholarship program primarily benefits those in urban areas of our state. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka.

To address these concerns, I urge the committee to consider the following policy solutions:

1. **Repealing voucher tax credits** – These credits serve no legitimate public purpose and disproportionately benefit the wealthiest taxpayers at the expense of public education.
2. **Preventing tax avoidance** – If outright repeal is not feasible, states should adopt reforms to ensure that contributions made under these programs do not qualify for federal business expense deductions or other tax benefits that result in profit-making. Illinois has already implemented such a provision, which could serve as a model for other states.
3. **Ensuring transparency and accountability** – States should require comprehensive reporting on the income distribution of credit recipients and the financial impacts of these programs on public education funding.

Ultimately, the best way to ensure a fair and sustainable public education system is to maintain strong public investment in our schools rather than incentivizing the redirection of public dollars to private entities. I urge this committee to carefully consider the implications of voucher tax credits and take decisive action to protect public education.

Thank you for your time and consideration, please oppose **Senate Bill 87**.

Erica Benson
Overland Park, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

Kristen Blackton
Private Citizen
krosekauf@gmail.com
SB 87

Opponent

Written-Only Testimony
March 10, 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 USD 232. I am writing today to voice my **opposition** to SB 87. 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.

SB 87 is 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. 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. Furthermore, this bill should **not** be the focus on the legislature when the special education programs in our state continue to be underfunded. I attended our school board meeting this week virtually, and our superintendent gave an overview of how this year's proposed legislation could impact our district. In our district, which is relatively small compared to many in our county, we are already diverting over \$7 million dollars from our district's general fund in order to fund our special education services, which are essential to students and also required by law. This reallocation of funds means that **all** students are affected by the legislature's failure to fund special education in Kansas public schools. SB 87 would further disenfranchise public school students as even more funds that would have gone to help public schools will be diverted to private schools, which are not required to accept or provide services for students with special needs.

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 SB 87.

Thank you for your time,

Kristen Blackton
Shawnee, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter-Blank

Title: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: ehunterblank@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill # SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, OR NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL OR WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY: Written Testimony

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Dear Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in opposition to bill SB 87. I am strongly urging you not to divert more of our state general funds to private schools especially when the congress is refusing to fully fund Special Education.

I am a licensed social worker and know that the state is required to provide public education and assistance to students with Special needs. This is something that private schools do not have to do and often don't have the appropriate staff to provide services. Private schools can turn away students while public schools cannot. I realize that this particular bill is not specifically about the Special Education funding however, because the school is legally required to provide those services that now are not adequately funded, money will need to be taken from other funds to meet those obligations. My concern is not only for my school district but also for school districts all of our great state of Kansas, and especially rural schools.

My parents provided me with a Catholic education. This was in part to fulfill a promise my dad made (who was not Catholic) when he married my mother that he would raise his children Catholic. My parents also had the financial means to do this. However, many people who don't have the financial means to send their children to private schools are able to send their children to public schools and the Catholic Churches provide Sunday school for religious teachings.

While my husband and I don't have our own children, we strongly believe in the need to provide good quality public education to the children in our community. We feel it is so important to provide this in order for them to grow up to be competent and productive citizens. We have always been more than happy to pay our taxes for this goal. My husband is also a product of public education in the Shawnee Mission School District which has served him well and we hope to pass that opportunity onto future generations.

In addition, even though we don't have children ourselves, we chose to live in Johnson County KS because of the quality public schools which among other things is attractive to home buyers and resale value of our home.

I am asking you to please vote NO on bill SB 87

Sincerely,

Mrs. Elizabeth Hunter-Blank
Mission Hills, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Larry Hunter-Blank

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: HunterBlank@me.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. I am a seventy-two-year-old married man and registered Republican who lives in Mission Hills, KS. While my wife and I have no children of our own, we view our public schools as a critical component of a city, state and country. Equal access to education has been a staple of our country since its inception. Draining funds from that public institution to supplement non-public institutions will, I fear diminish the educational opportunities for **all** of the states' children.

I benefit from the good public schools that my local school district of Shawnee Mission affords to all of our children. It helps to support property values and maintain the economic value of life in the state of Kansas. When my wife and I moved to the greater Kansas City area, we might well have been better off purchasing a home in Missouri. Without children, the consideration of public schools was not a personal need we had. However, we realized that long term, a good and thriving public school system was critical to the community in which we wanted to live as well as a support for a better economic return we would receive from the purchase of our home. Consequently, we chose to live in Mission Hills, one block from State Line.

I ask you to vote no on bill SB 87 and keep funds assigned for public education available to **all** of the children of Kansas.

Larry Hunter-Blank

Mission Hills, KS

NAME: Katy Borders

TITLE: Kansas Citizen and parent to three children within BVSD

EMAIL ADDRESS: katy.borders@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

We moved to Kansas for the school system in 2018. We have three kids currently utilizing the Blue Valley School District. Please vote NO on expanding the tax credit scholarship program. The public school system already isn't funded well enough to cover all of the programs that are needed, especially with the increase in special needs students. Government money should not be subsidizing those who elect not to go through the public education system. People opt out of public education on their own. Private schools do not offer the equity or equality that public schools offer re: special needs. These services are rarely available in private schools and thus those children receive benefits through public education. All three of my kids have some sort of IEP or 504 plan. If we take tax dollars out of our public education system and divert them to private schools we are hurting the future of Kansas.

In closing please **VOTE NO** on bill SB 87

Katy Borders

Leawood Kansas

NAME: Kelly Dean Brende

TITLE: Kansan and Parent in Shawnee Mission School District and Taxpayer

EMAIL ADDRESS: kbrende23@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & members of the committee:

I am writing to voice my OPPOSITION to bill SB 87 and urge you to vote NO.

I have three children who have attended our public schools, and my husband and I both attended public schools as well. Strong public schools are the backbone to our communities. Strong public schools benefit all Kansans in many ways including providing an educated work force which attract businesses to our State and provide job opportunities and revenue to Kansas.

I truly believe that expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program for families attending private schools drains public schools (and the entire state budget) of needed resources for successful student learning. We should not be diverting public tax dollars to families who send their children to private schools especially at a time when legislators should be focused on the millions of dollars shortfall in special education funding.

By diverting public tax dollars this way, you are hurting low-income students and rural students. These families may not be able to afford a private school or there may not be a private school available in rural areas, but this bill will lower the state revenue by millions of dollars drastically affecting public education and other state services including much needed infrastructure. This bill provides tax breaks to the wealthy who can afford to send their children to private schools while I still have to pay taxes. Strong public schools benefit our entire communities including those who choose to send their children to a private school or home school their children.

Public schools are economic drivers. Businesses and families look for quality public schools when relocating. Quality public schools also protect our property values which drive businesses and families to relocate to Kansas.

I request that you oppose SB 87 and vote NO so this bill does not make it out of this Committee.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Kindly,
Kelly Dean Brende
Leawood, Kansas

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Jessica Bright

TITLE: Kansas Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: Jessica.lauran28@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & members of the committee,

Thank you for your service and taking the time to read the public's testimony. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 87.

As a lifelong Kansan, I chose to stay in Kansas to raise my own family in large part due to our outstanding public schools.

I had the privilege to receive an excellent education through the Blue Valley School District and am now watching my seven-year-old thrive in the Olathe School District. Everyone who lives in the Kansas City metro area knows that Kansas schools are far and away the best in the area. They are the reason our property values are consistently higher and homes in the area are more sought after.

SB 87 jeopardizes this stellar reputation. By diverting general fund dollars to private schools, we would be robbing not only our public schools, which 90% of Kansas children attend, but also our roads and highways (which are again, a benchmark of excellence in the area).

We have the benefit of hindsight with this bill. Multiple states have implemented similar bills and have seen not only their public education funding suffer, but they have also not reported growth in private education enrollment. This means these tax refunds are not being used to enroll additional children in private schools, they are simply providing a tax break for people wealthy enough to already be enrolled in these schools.

I am asking you to vote no on bill SB 87 so that Kansas schools so that Kansas schools continue to excel.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Jessica Bright

Olathe

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Kate Carter-Brown

TITLE: Public School Teacher

EMAIL ADDRESS: kate.garrett2030@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

I have spent the last 12 years teaching in Kansas' public schools. I've been fortunate enough to teach at both the middle school and high school levels, and across three districts in the Kansas City area. My own children attend public schools and watching them learn, grow and flourish within the public school system has been a gift.

Public schools and what they offer to our children, our communities, and our state are invaluable. Public schools are the cornerstone of our community. Each and every child in the state (and the nation) deserves access to equitable education. This cannot be done without explicit and fair funding to the public school system within our state. I have witnessed first hand the impact that education can have on the life of a child.

Vouchers divert public funds away from public schools. It is our top responsibility to provide for each and every child within the state. To do that we must not funnel funds to private institutions and citizens. We must make absolutely certain that our public schools are our priority. To do this we must properly fund these schools. We must make them desirable, equitable, safe, and the very best they can be.

Public schools have resources, expertise and regulations that allow for each and every student to receive a fair and just education. I have witnessed many students throughout my career who came into the public school system because of specific needs that were not met within a private institution. I have witnessed families send some of their children to private schools while

sending a child/children with more complex educational needs to a public school because of what the public body is able to provide to that child. Schools can only provide these services through funding. Taking funding away from schools is devastating to families and our communities. Private schools can be an excellent choice for a family, but it is our public schools that provide for the community at large. School choice is just that, a choice— a private choice. Public schools are our responsibility as citizens that want the best for every single child of our community, beyond the walls of our own homes.. We, as a collective, must fund our public schools regardless of our own personal schooling choices for our families.

The children are all ours. The future of public schools and public education is our future. Kansas has always had a public school system to be proud of and we must do our absolute due diligence to continue this long standing tradition and take care of our children-rather than taking away from them.

In closing, I ask you to vote no on bill SB 87. Do not divert funds away from our public schools systems, from our community care, from our future. Thank you.

Kate Carter-Brown
High School English Teacher
Roeland Park, KS

NAME: Dawn Brumbley

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, parent

EMAIL: dawnraeann@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the bill number SB 87.

I find myself yet again in amazement that at every turn, it seems this legislature is trying to remove funding from public education. The harm it would cause is massive, especially because funding is being slashed at the national level yet again. This bill is harmful to public education, and the vast majority of Kansas children are in public education. This current bill opens the opportunity for corporations and the wealthy to be reimbursed with PUBLIC tax dollars at 75% as they call themselves "donors" to private schools and institutions. This reimbursement reduces the state general fund, which is already being reduced to fund Special Education- because the state is still REFUSING to fully fund Special Education. This is a blatant way for private corporations and investors to steal tax money from the state under the guise of donations- which is just stealing money from our children, their education, and the future of our state. There is no reason nor any need to expand the current guidelines, and frankly, there are things not being addressed that the legislature SHOULD focus on, as in FULLY FUNDING SPECIAL EDUCATION.

KANSANS VALUE OUR PUBLIC EDUCATION. Please stop trying to rob our public education to funnel into private education where MOST Kansas kids are not attending. My nonverbal, autistic child has no opportunity to attend a private school in all of Johnson County, even if I WANTED him to attend. There are no private institutions that will accept his level of need, which is only provided by public schools. My private health insurance won't even cover the therapies that he needs. Are we as Kansans willing to just sacrifice these programs and our disabled children for the ultra-wealthy and corporations? Protect and support our PUBLIC EDUCATION.

VOTE NO on Bill SB 87.

Thank you,

Dawn Brumbley

Kansas parent

Olathe, KS



Laurel Burchfield

Advocacy Director, Mainstream Coalition

contact@mainstream.vote

SB 87 - Expanding student eligibility under the tax credit for low income students scholarship program

Opponent

Written only

March 10, 2025

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony for Senate Bill 87 on behalf of Mainstream Coalition.

Mainstream Coalition OPPOSES SB 87. This proposal is an attempt to divert funds from public schools to benefit those who make the choice to enroll their children in private, often religious, schools. **This diversion of public funds is another state-sponsored attempt to undermine public schools and favor private, often religious ones.**

SB87 is an expansion of a program beyond its original intent to serve low-income students. Already, the program has been expanded to include students with higher income levels (up to 250% of the federal poverty level which is above the KS median household income). Even with that expansion, only a small percentage of eligible students (approximately 0.5% in 2023) have applied for and received these so-called “scholarships.” SB87 would now expand it even further to include students who have never attended a Kansas public school. **No other state program would receive such a push for expansion so quickly with these results.**

Wealthy donors would get 75% of their taxes returned for contributions to a program that only a very small percentage of Kansas students participate in. **These are dollars that should be going to the state general fund which funds public goods, such as public education, and not back into the pockets of wealthy individuals.**

Public schools are accessible to and held accountable by all Kansans. Proposals like SB 87, and other tax credit and voucher programs, benefit those families who choose to enroll their students in private schools. These institutions often have limited or no accountability, can discriminate against potential students during the enrollment process, and center religious teachings – and do so at the expense of our general fund and public school funding. This is bad for our schools and for our students who do not fit into specific religious world views.

Kansas residents represent a plurality of religious beliefs and practices, and under the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, we are protected from our government essentially funding religious institutions. Recent court cases around vouchers continue to

dissolve this fundamental principle of our country's founding, and **SB 87, with its inclusion of students who have never attended public school as beneficiaries, is pushing even harder at this wall with the intent to fully break it down.**

SB87 essentially mandates that Kansas residents participate in the diversion of tax dollars away from public schools and into often religious institutions, making Kansans now donate or tithe to churches to which they don't belong.

It also promotes a very specific view of the world that can be based on narrow, extremist religious teachings that don't represent the beliefs of many people of faith. Three of the most popular US textbooks and curricula used by Christian schools and homeschools have been shamed publicly for the way they teach things like science and history. At one point, an Accelerated Christian Education or ACE textbook, taught that the Loch Ness monster is real, and a modern day dinosaur as proof of creationism¹. These text books have taught that slavery was "black immigration"², that Native Americans are savages, primitives, or demon worshipers³, as well as presenting negative views of the LGBTQ+ community, non-Christians, and others. **Since private schools are not held to the same expectations and standards as public schools, even if students in Kansas are not being taught these things, there's no protection against it and no way to stop it.**

While our public schools have been fighting to increase graduation rates, the CEO of A.C.E. has said "graduation is important, but salvation is more important."⁴ **That is not the purpose of education.**

For these reasons, Mainstream opposes SB87 and we strongly urge you to reject this expansion of this program beyond the scope of its original intent.

Thank you,

Laurel Burchfield
Mainstream

¹ "Shocking Christian school textbooks," Salon, June 19, 2012. Found at:

https://www.salon.com/2012/06/19/shocking_christian_school_textbooks_salpart/

² "US History Textbooks Refer To Slavery As 'Black Immigration,'" The Guardian, Aug 12, 2021. Found at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/aug/12/right-wing-textbooks-teach-slavery-black-immigration>

³ "Accelerated Christian Education: a case study of the use of race in voucher-funded private Christian schools," Jenna Scaramanga and Michael J. Reiss, 2018. Found at: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1177216>

⁴ "The Vision of A.C.E.," Adapted from a speech by Mr. Duane Howard at A.C.E.'s International Corporate Offices. Found at: <https://www.aceschooloftomorrow.com/news/oct1923-02>

Testimony to the House Committee on Education**NAME:** Anna Clark**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen, parent**EMAIL ADDRESS:** aclark320@gmail.com**BILL NUMBER:** Bill SB 87**Opponent****WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY****DATE OF HEARING:** March 10, 2025

Dear Chair Estes and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. Public tax dollars are meant for public goods like our public schools. This bill reduces the state general fund by diverting public tax dollars to private schools, undermining the state's ability to adequately fund our public schools. These programs lack oversight and provide public tax dollars to private schools that are allowed to discriminate in admissions.

Public money supports the entire public. No one should be denied public services which come from public funds. If Kansans want to send their kids to private school, then they pay privately. As they always have. Kansas has good public schools. Please fund them to make them stronger! Special education is underfunded as well, so how could we even be discussing funding privatized establishments, when we can't properly fund our own public establishments?

Our tax dollars would be better served by fully funding special education which will benefit all students. I ask that you vote NO on SB 87 and devise a better plan for Kansas Families and Kids.

Sincerely,
Anna Clark
Life Long Kansan

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Amy Collins

TITLE: Kansas Parent, Voter, and Licensed Psychologist

EMAIL ADDRESS: aelusion7@hotmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

Please vote no on voucher bill SB 87. Our public tax dollars are meant to support our public schools. This bill reduces the state general fund by diverting public tax dollars to private schools, undermining the state's ability to adequately fund our public schools. Diverting public school funds to private schools when special education is already underfunded in Kansas is especially cruel. Instead, use public tax dollars to fully fund special education.

Voucher programs lack oversight and provide public tax dollars to private schools that are allowed to discriminate in admissions. **This violates the constitutional state/church separation.** This bill would reduce state revenue and cause harm to the 90+% of Kansas students who attend public schools. These bills enrich wealthy, Christian, non-disabled, and non-LGBT students and adults by endangering the education of the most vulnerable children. This is harmful to our communities and our state.

As a resident of Johnson County, I also do not want rural taxpayers having to subsidize private schools for wealthy families in metro areas such as ours while education funding and options disappear in their own communities.

As the parent of two children who attend public elementary school in Kansas, I strongly encourage you to **support the education of ALL Kansas students by voting NO on voucher bills SB 87.**

Please provide confirmation that my testimony has been received and added to the written only conferee list.

Amy Collins, Ph.D.

Kansas Parent, Voter, and Licensed Psychologist

Overland Park, KS 66212

Testimony to the House Committee on Education**NAME:** Lenet Compton**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen**EMAIL ADDRESS:** lenetcompton@gmail.com**BILL NUMBER:** Bill SB 87**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written**DATE OF HEARING:** March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to share my opinion.

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

Diverting public funding away from public schools to private and sometimes religious schools should be against the law. Public money should only go to public schools. Private money should only go to private schools. That is the ethical and fiscally responsible thing to do.

What we really need is more public fund investment in public school teachers, public school facilities and learning tools. I have very little say in how much I am taxed. SB 87 voucher scheme takes that marginalization a step further barring me from having a say in the type of education children receive. Why would anyone give educational dollars that were taken from the diverse public and give them to organizations that aren't required to have a broad, objective, fact based end product?

I grew up in the public school system. I had friends and relatives that went to private, religious schools. I don't care that private schools exist. I care about how they are funded.

SB 87 is nothing short of stealing from the public especially when special education is underfunded. I ask you to vote no on bill SB 87.

Lenet Compton
Leawood

Testimony to the House Committee on Education**NAME:** Dr Elisabeth Cozad**TITLE:** physician, parent**EMAIL ADDRESS:** ELCOZAD@yahoo.com**BILL NUMBER:** Bill SB 87**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:**written**DATE OF HEARING:** March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

As a parent of a highly gifted child and neurodiverse children, neither of whom would be adequately served outside of the public school system and

An active member of a PTA in a school with special education in it, I am horrified at the idea of decreasing funding to the public school system which is already underfunded. Kansas schools are excellent and they serve all children. Please do not remove the funding from those who have needs and cannot be served by private schools. Our neediest children deserve as much support as our most resources children and that will not happen with a voucher system.

Please be pro life by supporting the education of ALL children.

Vote NO ON VOUCHERS

Dr Elisabeth Cozad

Physician, parent

Shawnee

Michelle Sims

From: The Dagues <ddague@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 4:27 PM
To: House Education
Subject: Testimony tp the House Education Committee

Testimony to the House Education Committee

March 10, 2025

Bill SB87, Tax Credit Scholarship Expansion

Nancy Dague, Retired Teacher

njdague@gmail.comT

Opponent Written-Only Testimony

As a retired teacher who taught in both private and public schools, I am asking for a NO vote on SB 87 which provides for huge tax credits for the rich to send their children to private schools.

As a teacher in a private school I have witnessed that private schools :

1. Do not have to accept all children.
2. Children with special needs were bused to public school for help.
3. Private schools are not required to take state tests as do public school children.
4. Not all teachers in private schools have Kansas teaching certificates.

Many areas in rural Kansas have no access to private schools. The nearest private schools in my small town are 15 and 25 miles away.

This bill will take money away from public schools and will not adequately provide for low income families to send their children to private schools. As finances for public schools decrease some smaller schools will be closed, schools consolidated, and students will need to be bused longer distances.

Please consider education for ALL Kansas students,

Signed,
Nancy J. Dague

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Erin Dahl

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, teacher

EMAIL ADDRESS: edahl@kcai.edu

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

This bill will expand the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program that already exists in Kansas; it will expand the program beyond its original intent, which was to provide low-income (at-risk) students with an opportunity to attend a private school. Like other voucher programs, this program diverts public tax dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to deny admission for any number of reasons.

Ultimately, this bill incentivizes its use as a tax avoidance scheme that can bring big benefits to corporations and the wealthy while reducing the state general fund used to fund our public schools, maintain our roads and bridges, and more.

This bill allows these groups to exploit loopholes in the tax system, diverting crucial public funding away from public schools that serve the majority of students. Instead of investing in equitable education for all, this bill would create a system where the rich have greater access to resources while leaving underfunded public schools to struggle. We need policies that prioritize funding and supporting public education, not enriching private interests at the expense of our children's future. The legislature shouldn't be diverting public dollars to private schools when special education is underfunded.

As a teacher, I will face the reality of my students and I being negatively impacted by this bill. I ask that you please vote no on SB 87.

Erin Dahl

Kansas Citizen and teacher

Roeland Park, KS

~~Jean Daugherty~~

~~Concerned citizen~~

~~boejd@yahoo.com~~

~~RE: Bill SB 87~~

~~Written Only Testimony~~

~~Date of Hearing: March 10, 2025~~

~~=~~

~~Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,~~

~~I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. As a public school educator in the Shawnee Mission Public Schools for over 34 years, I know that diverting more public tax dollars to expand this tax credit "scholarship program" for private schools will be detrimental for students in public school. I taught Special Education for my entire career and my three children graduated from Shawnee Mission Schools. To best serve the students eligible for the scholarship program, you should fully fund special education which has been underfunded since 2011. I urge you to vote no on SB 87. Under the current guidelines, there are plenty of students who are eligible for the existing program. Expanding to include additional categories of students without income limits takes spots away from those with low incomes.~~

~~Respectfully,~~

~~Jean Daugherty~~

~~10328 Mohawk Lane~~

~~Leawood, KS 66206~~

~~=~~

Concerning: SB 87
Testimony to the House Committee on Education
From: Judy Davis-Cole – Concerned Kansan
jdaviscole16@gmail.com
Opponent testimony –written testimony only

Chair Estes and Committee Members:

I am writing in opposition to SB 87.

I firmly believe that the writers of the Kansas Constitution had it right when they included Public Education in our document. Although I have no children of my own, I have always supported the fact that a majority of my state and county taxes go to support public schools and public education.

I am totally opposed to my tax dollars being taken away from our public schools and given to private and home schools.

- These private and home schools have little to no accountability as to how the money would be spent
- These private and home schools in many instances are not regulated and have no established curricula
- There is no accountability as to degree of student progress in these private and home schools
- These schools do not have to accept children with disabilities

Our public schools continue to have issues with adequate funding as it is. Certainly our special education classes are underfunded.

I want my tax dollars to help our public schools.

Please vote “No” on SB 87

Respectfully,

Judith Davis-Cole
Ottawa, Kansas District 59

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my **opposition** to bill number **SB 87**.

I attended Kansas public schools throughout my childhood. Public schools instilled within me a sense of pride and community as I joined my peers in learning and growing. SB 87 threatens the efficacy of public schools and their service to the community at large.

Special needs students are already an under-served community. Diverting funds to private schools, via vouchers, will undermine our service to these students who already face significant challenges in school. More funding is needed to make our public schools better, rather than sending those funds to private schools which do not have to accommodate special needs students to the same degree. Furthermore, providing tax-payer funds to private schools is an irresponsible use of public resources. Private schools do not have the same burden of oversight, which can ensure responsible use of our tax dollars. I urge the legislature to take their responsibility to the public seriously - do not send our taxes to private schools for the benefit of those who have made a personal choice to educate their children elsewhere. Instead, fully invest in our public schools, our teachers, and our students (especially those with special needs).

Please vote NO on SB 87.

Eric DeVault

Olathe, KS 66061

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Erin Annette Dix

TITLE: Registered Nurse

EMAIL ADDRESS: erindixrn@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. I have adult children that have grown up in the public school system and are now making their way into the world. They are doing very well and the education they have received would not have been possible without the funding that our public taxes provide. In my opinion, expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will divert even more funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education, just to subsidize the private choices of a small minority of parents and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas.

In addition to this, the needs of our special education students are vital to the overall well-being of our communities and this bill will prevent our special education population from being fully funded. I personally have a 11 year old on an IEP in the lola School District.

This program allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors. The Tax Credit Scholarship program, like most voucher programs, is welfare for the wealthy. Private schools are under no obligation to admit low-income students under this bill and in many cases in the rural setting private school is not an option. Rural communities are already stretched financially and taking away public funds will harm a great many families in parts of the state who depend on them. The only families to benefit are a few wealthy locations that already have the means to pay for private school and the availability of private school options.

Finally, there are no controls in place to ensure eligible at-risk students who apply for a scholarship are granted one, as private schools are allowed to set their own admission standards. There are no controls in place to ensure those who will receive scholarships receive a quality education. Our tax dollars should not go to private schools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children. Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars.

I again ask you to vote NO in opposition to Senate Bill 87.

Thank you,

Erin Annette Dix- born and raised in Topeka, KS, attending Seaman High School and graduating from Holton High in 1989

Michelle Sims

From: Michelle Dombrosky <mldombrosky@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 7, 2025 2:42 PM
To: House Education
Subject: Please consider my opponent testimony for SB 87

Dear Michelle Sims, Honorable Chair Estes,
Honorable Vice Chair Stogsdil, and members of the House education committee,

Please accept and consider voting no on SB 87.

I hope you will read the opponent testimony included in my email below.
It is lengthy. I appreciate in advance if you will take the time to read the research that has been done on this.

VOTE NO on SB87

Following is a review we conducted of the Kansas Tax Credit for Low Income Scholarship Program (TCLISSP).

Afterwards several of us had the following questions:

I hope you consider these when you have a hearing on it next week.

How is the TCLISSP truly an empowerment of parents to provide their child with a nonpublic education? Most participating schools meet the same accreditation requirements as the public schools they purport to be different from. Even those not accredited by the State of Kansas are accredited by national and international organizations that require much the same as the State of Kansas. How is this giving kids a “fighting chance”?

How have private and parochial schools already become dependent on a government funding mechanism via the TCLISSP?

Does it really meet the true definition of “neighbors just helping neighbors”?

If “school choice” is not truly resulting in something different than a public education, then what exactly is being achieved by designing tax code manipulations and funding?

We have Kansans referring to the Kansas Tax Credit for Low Income Scholarship Program (TCLISSP) as “private” funding for nonpublic schools. That these are “private scholarships.” <https://www.edchoice.org/school-choice/programs/kansas-tax-credit-for-low-income-students-scholarship-program/>

But, are these REALLY private?

And, why are Christian religious organizations the ones by and large taking advantage of this program?

- Has this school choice program resulted in participating parochial schools being unique, or are participating parochial schools actually very much like the public schools?
- Is religious liberty compromised when religious organizations seek to be included in government financial schemes?

Historically, when one has heard the word “private” as in private business, private property, private education, etc., the words “government,” “government tax breaks,” “government regulations,” etc. do not come to mind.

Definitions of “private” include: Secluded from the sight, presence, or intrusion of others. Not known or intended to be known publicly. Preferring to keep personal affairs to oneself.

You get the picture.

The notion of a privately funded, owned, designed anything invokes thoughts of an individual personally funding something from his own resources, without the involvement, oversight, or even knowledge of anything having to do with the “government.”

Yet, apparently, we live at a time when something can still be termed/deemed “private” that is a mechanism of government, and that all the commensurate IRS forms, government definitions and requirements, government department reporting, auditing, etc. of “private” donations and “private” scholarships to kids is “PRIVATE.”

The promoters of Kansas’ TCLISSP – all the “conservative” Republicans who voted to pass it in 2014 and have voted repeatedly to expand it since, as well as “conservative” lobby organizations – refer to the TCLISSP as a “privately funded scholarship program.” Private?

<https://www.ksde.gov/Agency/Fiscal-and-Administrative-Services/School-Finance/Tax-Credit-for-Low-Income-Students-Scholarship-Program>

- Tax credits via a government tax form and government tax agencies

- Scholarship granting organizations (SGOs) as defined by the government
- Students as deemed eligible by the government
- Qualifying schools as deemed by the government
- Regulations by the government
- Reporting to, by, and between government agencies

Does something private or privately funded involve any of these things?

A look at the TCLISSP at the above link and on the KSDE website provides a whole lot of GOVERNMENT and CONTROL.

In addition to all the mechanisms of the TCLISSP, what is the actual impact on the participating schools, and most importantly the students that attend? Are they offering and getting an actual education, unique and different from the public schools?

Let's take a look at a private school that participates in the TCLISSP, Central Christian School in Hutchinson, KS. The superintendent of the school, John Walker, submitted testimony in support of a school choice tax credit bill (SB75) being considered by the Kansas legislature. Is this school different from a public school?

- It's accreditations and affiliations are strongly Common Core, believe it or not.
 - The school is fully accredited by ACSI. (The "I" is for International.) (Mr. Walker also serves as the KS representative for **all** Kansas schools accredited by ACSI.)
 - ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) has long been aligned and partnered with CCSS (Common Core) publishers, assessment providers, etc.
 - The superintendent also serves on the board of directors of KAIRS (KS Association of Independent and Religious Schools).
 - KAIRS is affiliated with ACSI, CAPE (Council for American Private Education).
 - CAPE is also aligned with the CCSS.
 - KAIRS accrediting bodies include AdvancED, KSDE, and ACSI.
 - AdvancED/Measured Progress is now Cognia. CCSI accreditation and assessments. Heavily data driven.
 - Looking at KAIRS administrator and teacher conference offerings, you will be hard pressed to find anything different from what you would find for public schools.
- The school participates in KEEP (Kansas Education Enrichment Program)
 - A program funded with federal ARPA monies in response to Covid.
- The school has expanded its preschool and child care programming with several hundreds of thousands of dollars from:
 - A grant from the Reno City Child Care Task Force, and
 - The Kansas Child Care Accelerator Grant.

Already the CCSS alignments and connections via ACSI, KAIRS, AdvancED/Cognia, as well as the funding via government "opportunities" in addition to the participation in the TCLISSP are not giving us the sense that the school is much different from a public school.

Academically, the school provides its intention is to offer a Christ-centered education to develop a biblical worldview in students. It does not provide the what resources it uses for academic offerings, only stating that, "Most, but not all, of our curriculum is from biblical worldview publishers." The school does participate in MAP testing, the KBOR (KS Board of Regents) Scholar's Curriculum, and dual credit courses.

Taking the entire list of participating qualified schools on KSDE's website, we found that only 18 out of 125 were not accredited by the State of Kansas. Of the 18, ten were accredited by ACSI.

Again

The TCLISSP is a tax credit scholarship program. It is being stated that it is "not a government ... program, but neighbors helping another neighbor's children" likening the TCLISSP to doing something solely between two neighbors. That is a complete falsehood. These "scholarships" in this program are via a tax mechanism, and involve IRS tax forms, the Dept of Rev, the Dept of Ed, and a law (that has been continuously amended over the years since its initial passage) that defines "eligible" students and "qualifying" schools, government reporting, etc.

The "scholarships" awarded from this program involve family/student eligibility requirements (as mandated by the government law) and school qualifying requirements (as mandated by the government law). This, again, is not a simple "neighbor helping neighbor" transaction.

In the 1983, Tuition Tax Credit publication by Barbara Morris, she the following regarding "What is a Tuition Tax Credit?"

Basically, a tuition tax credit (TTC) is a "gift" from the federal government. This "gift" is created by amendment of the Internal Revenue Code to allow a federal income tax credit for tuition.

It is a "gift" that can only be accepted through filing an income tax return. Thus, this "gift" is allowed by the Internal Revenue Service and therefore, is subject to the same IRS scrutiny as any other item on the return.

It means a tuition tax credit is a lot more than a simple "gift" to assist in the education of children . The law that makes the "gift" possible also includes a few "strings," which may be good or bad, depending on the intent.

Even though the current legislation is carefully worded, the principal concern remains that once it becomes law, it can be amended in future years to serve a purpose far removed from

the original intent . What is a "gift" today could become an uncontrollable monster tomorrow.

For the cruel truth is that what the federal government gives (allows), it can take away, and in the process, much more can be taken with it than was ever thought possible.

Sound familiar?

This is not simply a "scholarship," as it is being deceptively re-named. It IS a "tax credit" program. It is a "government gift," not private funding.

Respectfully,

Michelle Dombrosky

Olathe KS 66062

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Patricia Draper

TITLE: KS Citizen, mother, wife and social worker

EMAIL ADDRESS: draper.patricia@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 87, which seeks to expand the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program in Kansas. This expansion is an irresponsible diversion of public tax dollars away from our public schools and into private institutions that lack the oversight, accountability, and inclusivity that our public schools provide.

I am a parent of two young children who are just beginning their academic journey's, my daughter Ann is in 2nd grade, and my son Tommy is in Kindergarten at Rising Star Elementary in Lenexa, KS. We feel so lucky to send our kids to such a diverse school, and it is clear that this school needs all the funding it can get. It is clear they do the best they can with the funding and staff that they have, but it is not enough as it currently stands. I fear what will happen if funding is lowered in any way. Last year, while my son was in Pre-K, he had a surgery that greatly limited his mobility and had him wheelchair bound for 3 months. Having a child with a physical disability is a hugely stressful thing, and knowing that he was not only welcomed at school but that the staff approached a child with a physical disability as a joy to have at school and not at all a burden. More than one staff member reassured me that this is what school was for, to help students and families no matter what their circumstance. **Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education, and programming for children with disabilities.**

When first introduced, this program was intended to support low-income students attending the 100 lowest-performing public schools. However, past legislative expansions have significantly altered the program's original intent by increasing the income eligibility limit to 250% of the Federal Poverty Level and removing restrictions on which public school students may participate. The latest proposed expansion would further extend eligibility to certain

groups of students regardless of income and increase the program's funding cap from \$15 million to \$25 million.

Expanding this program is not necessary. There are still over 233,000 students in Kansas who qualify under the original at-risk criteria, demonstrating that need can still be met within the existing framework. Expanding eligibility to additional students—many of whom are neither low-income nor at-risk—only reduces the available support for those the program was originally designed to help. Families that do not have the resources to independently support their child's academic improvement or future should be prioritized.

Kansas public schools serve all children and must be fully funded to ensure equitable education opportunities for every student. Redirecting public funds to private schools that are not held to the same standards and can deny admission for various reasons is a disservice to Kansas families. I urge you to oppose SB 87 and prioritize strengthening our public education system instead.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Patricia Draper, Concerned mother and taxpayer

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Lindsay Dress

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: lmd5ff@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

We should be fully funding special education and public education for the prosperity and future of Kansas and its citizens. Diverting money to private schools is absolutely harmful to the average American. Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will divert even more funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education, to subsidize the private choices of some parents and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas. Focus on fully funding special education, further dividing our community further. More education of the average American, is BEST for America. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that provide oversight for our tax dollars. We should not be expanding this program that already funnels tax payer dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions.

This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a personal choice to receive a religious (which we should be accounting for separation of church and state) or other non-public education.

Please vote no on bill SB 87, for the future of your children and citizens of Kansas.

Lindsay Dress

Kansas Citizen and parent

Leawood

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Jennifer Felix

TITLE:

EMAIL ADDRESS: jenniferannfelix@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

I am not only a mother of three children but also a Registered Behavior Technician with Kansas Behavior Supports, an Applied Behavior Analytics provider for children with autism. As a rural Kansan we rely on our public education system. We do not have private school options. Our rural areas already struggle with poverty and lack of good educational opportunities will be devastating. Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will divert funds from our only educational option.

My oldest graduated from Jayhawk Linn High School in Linn County with a full academic scholarship to Fort Scott Community College and is now studying Electrical Engineering at The University of Kansas. He was provided a decent education that is allowing him to go into a promising career and be an asset to society and our economy. My two youngest are still attending Jayhawk Linn High School and I hope that public education will continue to provide a decent education without further cuts to strained budgets and limit their opportunities.

My work as an RBT puts me in the homes of rural Kansans who have children with autism and need special educational support. I see their struggles on a day-to-day basis. Our schools already struggle with special education funding and our county districts often must bus special education children approximately 60 miles to the nearest district with the appropriate resources. Any loss of funding to our schools will compromise the ability of the districts to fund or be able to transport children who need special education.

This program allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors. The Tax Credit Scholarship program, like most voucher programs, is welfare for the wealthy. Private schools are under no obligation to admit low-income students under this bill.

Finally, there are no controls in place to ensure eligible at-risk students who apply for a scholarship are granted one, as private schools are allowed to set their own admission standards. Our tax dollars should not go to private schools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children. Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars.

I again ask you to vote NO in opposition of Senate Bill 87.

Thank you,

Jennifer Felix

Centerville KS, 66014

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: *Lara Fiscus*

EMAIL ADDRESS: *sarakf3@gmail.com*

BILL NUMBER: *Bill SB 87*

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: *Opponent*

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: *Written only*

DATE OF HEARING: *March 10, 2025*

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. I have adult children that have grown up in the public school system and are now making their way in the world. They both are doing very well and the education they received would not have been possible without the funding that our public taxes provide. Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will divert even more funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education, just to subsidize the private choices of some parents and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas. In addition to this, the needs of our special education students are vital to the overall well-being of our communities and this bill will prevent our special education population from being fully funded.

This program allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors. The Tax Credit Scholarship program, like most voucher programs, is welfare for the wealthy. Private schools are under no obligation to admit low-income students under this bill and in many cases in the rural setting private school is not an option. Rural communities are already stretched financially and taking public funds will harm a great many parts of the state dependent on these funds only to benefit a few wealthy locations that already have the means to pay for private school and the availability to even have the option for private school.

Finally, there are no controls in place to ensure eligible at-risk students who apply for a scholarship are granted one, as private schools are allowed to set their own admission standards. There are no controls in place to ensure those who will receive scholarships receive a quality education. Our tax dollars should not go to private schools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children. Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars.

I again ask you to vote NO in opposition of Senate Bill 87.

Thank you,
Lara Fiscus
Overland Park, 66209

March 6, 2025

Testimony to the House Education Committee

NAME: Elise Foley

TITLE: SMSD parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: eliseladd@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: SB 87 Education Opportunity Tax Credit

HEARING DATE: March 10, 2025

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Chair Estes and the members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

Public tax dollars belong to public schools that accept and educate ALL children. If parents choose to send their children to private schools or home school or co-op schooling, that's great-that decision is theirs to make, and thus should be on their own dime entirely or by fundraising through that specific system or congregation. Public schools serve the entire community. There is no denial of service. In a single classroom could be a neurodivergent student, a wealthy student, students on free and reduced lunch programs, a middle of the road student, a high achieving or accelerated student, a student on a behaviour plan, a student who needs extra services and ALL of these students are serviced by public school. There is no picking and choosing the best. Everyone gets to come to the table. MOST of those students would not be accepted into a private school, or parochial school not only because of cost, but because most religious institutions and private schools do not have the resources needed to acceptably educate all students. If the student fails- at academics, at "behaviour", and anything deemed inexcusable, they kick them out. Not to mention the severe lack of oversight of the distribution of funds.

I was a teacher in a private school for a decade, I have a first hand account of this happening and frequently. Why are we even considering taking away funds from our public schools who accept and work with all students, meeting them where they are? It is absurd to me that while we are under funded, because we can't seem to get on board

with funding Special Education, we're still talking about taking more money out of our public schools. Make it make sense.

I grew up going to public schools here in our community (Blue Valley) and my education was top tier. Any "pitfalls" in regards to religion or familial beliefs, etc. were mitigated at home (which I believe and have noticed has been the largest argument against public school) as they should be. My parents, like I do with my own children, took a strong engagement in my education because education doesn't just stop at school. Some, most, children don't get a support system like I had and that my children receive. They rely on their school for safety, security, a place to feel included, a place they can explore and learn and be exposed to all sorts of agreement and disagreement. Like minded individuals and completely different thinking individuals. Though any and all of those individuals are welcome. Don't take away from those kids- my kids.

In closing, I implore you to vote no on bill SB 87. It would be a major disservice to our children and their future and the future of our community. Please consider every single child in our community's care, not just the "best" ones. Vote no.

Elise Foley
Overland Park

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Brenda Starks Fonseca

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: brendassstarks@aol.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will divert even more funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education, just to subsidize the private choices of a small minority of parents and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas. There are 500,000 children in the public school system currently in Kansas. The 7 districts in Kansas that have the most numbers of children in private school total less than 20,000 students. The Wichita Unified School District has the most with 7,316 students followed by the Shawnee Mission Unified School District with 4,526 students. Olathe Unified School District has 2,291 students. Topeka Unified School District, Kansas City Unified School District, Lawrence Unified School District all have less than 2,000 students each. Over 200 Districts in Kansas have no private schools available for their children to attend, even if they wished to do so. [Private Schools in Kansas — Private School Demographics — ProPublica](#)

These districts with a large number of private school options are spread across 5 urban counties of the 105 counties in Kansas.

Rural communities are already stretched financially and taking public funds will harm a great many parts of the state dependent on these funds only to benefit a few wealthy locations that already have the means to pay for private school and the availability to even have the option for private school.

Finally, there are no controls in place to ensure eligible at-risk students who apply for a scholarship are granted one, as private schools are allowed to set their own admission standards. There are no controls in place to ensure those who will receive scholarships receive a quality education. Our tax dollars should not go to private schools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children. Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars.

I again ask you to vote NO in opposition of Senate Bill 87. Thank you.

Brenda Starks Fonseca

Shawnee, 66226

NAME: Heath Freeman

TITLE: School Board Member – USD 231 – Gardner Edgerton

EMAIL ADDRESS: heath.a.freeman@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

SB 87 is a direct threat to the future of public education in Kansas, and as a Board of Education member, a husband to a lifelong educator, and a father to a graduating senior, I cannot stand by in silence. This voucher scheme diverts critical taxpayer dollars away from our already underfunded public schools, funneling them into private institutions that lack transparency, accountability, and inclusivity.

Public schools serve all children, regardless of ability, background, or financial status. My son, like thousands of other Kansas students, has benefited from the dedicated educators and resources available in our public system. My wife has devoted her career to helping students succeed, and she has seen firsthand how these voucher systems harm—not help—public schools. Research has repeatedly shown that voucher programs do not improve student outcomes. In fact, studies from states that have adopted similar policies reveal declining academic performance and widening inequities.

Rather than draining resources from our schools, we should be investing in teacher pay, classroom resources, and special education funding. SB 87 weakens our education system, and it does so at the expense of the vast majority of Kansas students. Our children deserve better. Vote against SB 87.

Please vote NO on SB 87.

Respectfully,

Heath Freeman

USD 231 Board Member

Gardner, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: *Sean Fulton*

TITLE: *MD*

EMAIL ADDRESS: *labberwocky1169@hotmail.com*

BILL NUMBER: *Bill SB87*

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: *Opponent*

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: *Written only*

DATE OF HEARING: *March 10, 2025*

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB87. I have adult children that have grown up in the public school system and are now making their way in the world. They both are doing very well and the education they received would not have been possible without the funding that our public taxes provide. Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will divert even more funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education, just to subsidize the private choices of a small minority of parents and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas.

In addition to this, the needs of our special education students are vital to the overall well-being of our communities and this bill will prevent our special education population from being fully funded.

This program allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors. The Tax Credit Scholarship program, like most voucher programs, is welfare for the wealthy. Private schools are under no obligation to admit low-income students under this bill and in many cases in the rural setting private school is not an option. Rural communities are already stretched financially and taking public funds will harm a great many parts of the state dependent on these funds only to benefit a few wealthy locations that already have the means to pay for private school and the availability to even have the option for private school.

Finally, there are no controls in place to ensure eligible at-risk students who apply for a scholarship are granted one, as private schools are allowed to set their own admission standards. There are no controls in place to ensure those who will receive scholarships receive a quality education. Our tax dollars should not go to private schools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children. Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars.

I again ask you to vote NO in opposition of Senate Bill 87.

Thank you,

Sean Fulton

Overland Park, 66221