

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Lauren Lane

TITLE: Owner & Designer of Landscape by Lauren, KS Citizen & Parent of SMSD student

EMAIL ADDRESS: Laurenlane120@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

Dear members of the Senate Education Committee,

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

As a mother of a Shawnee Mission School District student and future students of public education, I'm opposed to this bill as it takes public tax dollars that should be used to strengthen our public schools and make Kansas a great place to raise children and gives it to families who make a personal choice to obtain religious or non-public education.

We should be using tax dollars to strengthen our public schools so that all students have access to a great education – not only those who can otherwise afford a private education.

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

Lauren Lane
Prairie Village, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Megan Langford

TITLE: Parent in Shawnee Mission School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: langford.megan@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: 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,

Thank you for reading my testimony and listening to the concerns of Kansans. I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 87.

I grew up in public schools, and my kids are growing up in public schools. Our public schools not only educate our kids, they prepare them for being integral members of society. A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students. Diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system.

Public dollars need to stay in public schools. Public schools accept and educate ALL students. They cannot pick and choose which students to accept. Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind. Vouchers like this tax credit program do not provide real choice. Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans choosing not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education, which is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

Please vote no on SB 87. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Megan Langford

Lenexa, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Betsey Lasister

TITLE: Kansas parent and former teacher

EMAIL ADDRESS: betseylasister@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 am a former public school teacher and I have children in the Olathe School District. Our children are our future, and public schools are invaluable to ensure our future is solid. Please stop dismantling this valuable public resource by funneling money into private schools that are not accessible to all Kansas children.

Public tax dollars belong with public schools:

- 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 or other non-public education.
- **Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education.**

No oversight or accountability:

- 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.

Please vote to protect Kansas students.

Betsey Lasister

Lenexa

Nicole Leggio
Kansas, SMSD Parent
nicoleliane728@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written 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.

My two children, soon to be three are all in the SMSD public school system. I believe it would do a disservice to ALL students in the public school system to divert tax dollars from public schools to private schools when we could be using that money to better our public education, notably to fully fund special education.

In addition, there are virtually 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. Kansas parents expect accountability for our tax dollars.

Please vote NO to bill SB 87

Nicole Leggio
Concerned Parent
Leawood, Kansas

Testimony to the House Committee on Education**NAME:** Carol Warman Leligdon**TITLE:** Concerned Kansan and Retired Teacher**EMAIL ADDRESS:** carol.leligdon@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 recently retired from teaching in Kansas schools, spending most of my years in low income schools. I am also a parent of 2 who attended public schools K-12. Strong public schools are critical to our society and our community.

I strongly oppose SB 87. Public money should stay in public schools. Instead of taking money from public schools and diverting it to private schools, we should be looking for ways to fully fund special education. Let's get our priorities straight.

This bill allows tax avoidance for wealthy donors. In addition, it favors urban areas and penalizes rural schools. Frankly, there is nothing good about this bill. Let's vote this down and move on to figuring out how to fully fund special education.

Please vote no on bill SB 87.

Regards,

Carol Warman Leligdon

Lenexa, Kansas

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Melinda Lewis

TITLE: Kansas citizen/taxpayer/parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: melindaklewis@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,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. I have 4 children in Kansas public schools, 3 still attending K-12 schools in our state, and 1 who is now in college—an outcome I do not believe would have been possible without the special education services he received in school. I am grateful that my tax dollars—and we pay quite a bit in property taxes for the Johnson County, Kansas home we own—support excellent public schools, and that those public schools include access to special education for those students who need it. Legislative proposals like SB 87 would 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. For families like mine, this would be devastating. 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 taxpayer dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions. My oldest child is a twice-exceptional learner—both gifted and on the autism spectrum. Few private schools can accommodate his learning needs—and none must. It is only well-funded public schools that can help students like him thrive. **Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education.**

It is a blessing and a joy to parent my children, and it is also challenging to meet their needs, particularly as they advance in school. I depend on quality public schools to ensure they receive a good education, and I am glad to pay taxes to support those institutions. Please oppose SB 87. Keep public dollars in public schools. Thank you for your service to Kansas and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,



Melinda Lewis

Prairie Village, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Jacqueline Lightcap

TITLE: Parent and school board member in USD 437 Auburn-Washburn

EMAIL ADDRESS: jacquielightcap@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: 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 SB 87. Despite being called a “tax credit,” it’s still a voucher program that will cut revenue to our public schools, causing harm to Kansas public schools and shortchanging the education of our youngest Kansans, especially at a time when special education is underfunded.

Here are a few reasons why educational “tax credits” or vouchers are bad for Kansas’s public schools.

- **They hurt student achievement.** In states that have implemented a similar program, unaccredited school vouchers hurt student achievement more than the 2020 pandemic (sources below).
- **They undermine public schools.** They divert resources away from public schools, attended by 90% of students, to fund the education of a few select students.
- **Private school tax credits or vouchers do not offer real choice.** Private schools can choose their students. Public schools are bound by law to accept all students.
- **Tax credits or vouchers fail to provide accountability to taxpayers.** Vouchers for private schools do not have appropriate oversight, which is critical when using public tax dollars.

As a parent to two products of Kansas public schools (one is in college and one is a high school senior this year), I can personally speak to the quality of our public education system in preparing students for postsecondary success. Seven years of serving on a public school board has also shown me the amazing work done by our schools on a daily basis. Public schools keep students at the center of their budgetary decisions; why would we want to divert funding from them, making it harder to do their critical work?

Public tax dollars should be used to fund services benefitting **all** citizens. I urge you to vote no on SB 87.

Jacqueline Lightcap
Topeka

Sources: R. Joseph Waddington & Mark Berends, [Impact of the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program: Achievement Effects for Students in Upper Elementary & Middle School](#), 37 J. of Policy Analysis & Mgmt. 4, 738-808 (Aug. 2018); Atila Abdulkadiroğlu, Parag A. Pathak, & Christopher R. Walters, [Free to Choose: Can School Choice Reduce Student Achievement?](#), 10 Am. Econ. Journal: Applied Econ. 1, 175-206 (Jan. 2018); David Figlio & Krzysztof Karbownik, Inst. (July 2016); U.S. Dep’t of Educ., [Evaluation of Ohio’s EdChoice Scholarship Program: Selection, Competition, & Performance Effects](#), Fordham [Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program: Impacts Two Years After Students Applied](#) (June 2018).

Testimony to the House Education Committee**NAME:** Rebecca Linn**TITLE:** Parent of students in Shawnee Mission School District and Kansas resident**EMAIL ADDRESS:** rlk81640@gmail.com**BILL NUMBER:** Bill SB 87**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written**HEARING DATE:** March 10, 2025

Dear Chair Estes and members of the committee,

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

This 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. 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.

Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate *all* children.

Thank you,

Rebecca Linn

Overland Park, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Sarah Lobdell

TITLE: Parent of children in Kansas public school

EMAIL ADDRESS: shamilton.rn@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 a parent of two children currently in public elementary school in the Shawnee Mission School District, one of which has just begun a special education program.

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. Instead, Kansas should focus on fully funding special education.

Protect our public schools and vote no on bill SB 87.

Sarah Lobdell

Parent of children in Kansas public school

Roeland Park, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Sean Lobdell

TITLE: Parent of children in Kansas public school

EMAIL ADDRESS: seanlobdell@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 a parent of two children currently in public elementary school in the Shawnee Mission School District, one of which has just begun a special education program.

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. Instead, Kansas should focus on fully funding special education.

Protect our public schools and vote no on bill SB 87.

Sean Lobdell

Parent of children in Kansas public school

Roeland Park, KS



Be informed.
Get involved.
Vote.

Testimony to the House Committee on Education regarding SB 87

NAME: Patty Logan

TITLE: Chair, Stand Up Blue Valley: Families for Our Schools

EMAIL ADDRESS: standupbv@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: 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 on behalf of Stand Up Blue Valley to voice our opposition to SB 87.

Stand Up Blue Valley: Families for Our Schools is a parent and patron advocacy group in the Blue Valley School District. We advocate for legislation that supports Blue Valley Schools and work to help our community understand the importance of their votes to our schools. Our members are residents of the Blue Valley School District in Johnson County, Kansas. Our children attend and/or have graduated from Blue Valley Schools.

We oppose any diversion of tax money to private schools. We oppose any expansion of the Tax Credit Scholarship Program, and we oppose the addition of any other program to divert tax money away from public schools to private schools. We share the Legislative Position of the Blue Valley District Board of Education: <https://www.bluevalleyk12.org/Page/36277>.

Stand Up Blue Valley opposes giveaways in the form of tax credits for donations toward funding private schools. This type of tax credit is not available to any taxpayer for any other donation, no matter how philanthropic. **Assigning this very special designation to the funding of private schools is not in the best interest of any Kansas student, any Kansas school district, or any Kansas citizen - other than the few who will use this to their financial benefit as they fund private schools of their own choosing.**

SB 87 would **add eligibility** for students whose parents meet certain arbitrary employment or vocation specifications and students who are *or ever were* in foster care. These designations serve only to increase the number of students eligible for this unproven program. **There is no evidence to support the notion that private school education would benefit the added categories of students, like the students originally designated for program inclusion.**

Private schools often include religious curriculum. **While we fully support the right of parents to send their students to any religious school they choose, we don't believe our tax dollars should be paying for religious education.**

Private schools are not required to accept or retain any student. We are aware of Blue Valley families whose special needs students were not able to attend BV-area private schools due to their needs not being met there. Expansion of eligibility for students to use Tax Credit Scholarships to attend private school expands the ability of private schools to benefit from accepting/choosing students who are easier to educate and leaving a disproportionate number of students with learning disabilities, physical differences, and behavioral issues for public schools to educate.

Blue Valley taxpayers understand that our taxes go to support our excellent public schools, which provide a quality education to over 22,000 students, support over 3000 jobs in our area, and turn out graduates who return to enhance our community. Our Blue Valley Schools are the backbone of our local economy and result in high home values as businesses and people move here for the schools. We disagree with the premise that some taxpayers would be allowed to get a credit on their taxes (thereby lowering the amount of taxes they are paying) in order to use their money to fund private schools. We disagree with the premise that private schools should be given tax money.

If philanthropically-minded individuals wish to fund scholarships for low income students to attend private schools, by all means they should do that. They should NOT, however, be allowed to deduct a credit from the tax they owe to the state of Kansas. If private schools wish to provide scholarships for students they choose to admit, by all means they should do that, using the many mechanisms available to them and already in use - but they should not be allowed to use tax money to do so.

We fully support the right of parents to determine whether public school, private school, or home schooling is best for each child in their family. We do not believe the taxpayers of Kansas should pay for that choice.

Stand Up Blue Valley remains opposed to the original Tax Credit Scholarship Program and we oppose any and all attempts to expand the diversion of state tax revenue to private schools. **We urge you to vote no on SB 87.**

Sincerely,

Patty Logan, Chair

On behalf of Stand Up Blue Valley: Families for Our Schools

Leawood, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Margaret Lund

TITLE: Public School Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: mollylund@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 am a public school parent and a product of the wonderful public schools in Kansas myself. My daughters, in 6th and 10th grades, have wonderful teachers and opportunities through this public resource. My neighborhood is thriving and my home value continues to increase, thanks to our nationally-recognized public schools.

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.

Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools – essentially welfare for the wealthy - the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education.

The Shawnee Mission School District is thriving with support of the state, but I especially worry about rural students who will be harmed as public school resources are drained.

Please vote NO on bill SB 87.

Thank you,
Margaret Lund

Prairie Village, KS

March 10, 2025

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Victoria Lynch

TITLE: Parent, Instructional Coach and Educator

EMAIL ADDRESS: VLuhrs@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony

Dear Chair Estes & members of the committee,

Thank you for your time serving Kansas. In 2005, I interned at the capitol, and I watched the Education committee in the Senate every time it was in session. Thank you for considering what's best for Kansas kids each day.

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 87. I have seventeen years of experience as an educator in Kansas schools including serving both the Kansas City, Kansas and Shawnee Mission Public School Districts and know the inner workings of our schools well. I urge you to oppose SB 87 because private schools do not meet the needs of ALL Kansas kids like the public schools do. It's dangerous to divert money to private schools when we are underfunding special education year after year.

Over the years, I have supported teachers and families as they transition to public schools because the private school down the road will not meet their students' needs or because their parents were unable to meet their needs in a homeschool setting. Our public schools deserve funding to meet the needs of the kids in our neighborhoods, regardless of their ability. We welcome everyone. Using public dollars for private schools and homeschooling drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning. Private schools are not held to the same accountability standards and are not required to participate in state testing, and in other states this gamble has NOT paid off for student achievement. Don't let Kansas make the same mistake.

Additionally, this will not be good for our home value. We live in the neighborhood where I work and where our children attend school. People chose our area because the public schools are great.. Public schools are economic drivers. Please do not divert public tax dollars to private schools in the bigger areas of the state – keep public funding public for all Kansas kids.

Please vote no on SB 87.

Victoria Lynch
Instructional Coach
Overland Park

TO: H.Education@house.ks.gov

BCC: Linda.Featherston@house.ks.gov, smacleg1@smac-pta.org

SUBJECT: SB 87 Written-Only Opposition
Testimony

I wish to convey my opposition to SB 87. As a Kansan and parent of two children in the Shawnee Mission School District, I am opposed to increasing voucher subsidies for private schools. My children have recieved an excellent education in public schools due to the effort of district standards, school administrators, and most importantly, teachers. My children spent the first two years of their education, preschool, in private school. I believe the quality of my children's public education to be equivalent to private education.

As a parent of children in public schools, I am aware funds are lacking for not only basic supplies, but additional teaching tools to enhance students learning experience. These additionally needed funds come out of the pockets of dedicated teachers who's salaries are not equivalent to the hard work and long hours they put in to their jobs and working parents. Being a teacher requires a love of the profession, passion for teaching and children, as their salaries are not motivation.

I respect the right of parents to choose alternative education settings such as private schools or home schooling, but it is a choice. Under the current Tax Scholarship Program, at-risk students finally have this option. However, I believe the increased funds allocated under SB 87 would not support more at-risk students, but benefit

students that do not need financial assistance and whose families can afford to choose private schooling. This was not the original intention of this program. These funds should be put to better use by continued support of at-risk students and special education, improving poor performing public schools and supplementing public schools that are meeting or exceeding standards.

Private schools lack oversight to assure that our tax dollars are spent to improve the education of our children. This lack of oversight does not insure that at-risk children who's parents apply for admission will be accepted into private school. Public schools educate all children. Private schools set their own admission guidelines and lack of oversight does not ensure those with scholarships are being accepted

and if private schools are providing quality education. Public schools have required standards they must meet. I believe myself and all Kansans deserve accountability for where our tax dollars are spent.

At-risk students this program was intended to support have additional limitations. Reliable transportation to a private school or living in a community where private schooling is not an option, such as rural communities, is a hinderence. Diverting funds from rural communities that are struggling to meet the needs of their students is wrong. School tax funding programs should benefit all Kansas students, not just those living in urban areas. The Tax Scholarship Program is asking rural Kansan tax payers to support a program that does not benefit their children. This is unjust.

As a parent and Kansas tax payer, I ask you not to modify the Tax Scholarship Program. Please do not approve SB 87. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Priscilla Maschler
Shawnee, Ks. 66203

Jamie Mast
Parent
jamiekmast@gmail.com
Bill SB 87
Opponent
WRITTEN ONLY
March 10th, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. I appreciate your time and willingness to learn about my opposition to bill SB 87 and hope that my perspective will be helpful in considering what happens with this bill.

I am so proud to have been born and raised in Belleville, KS and educated in public school in that rural setting. I still care fiercely for that community, as well as rural Kansas communities in general, even though I now live in Shawnee. For this reason, I strongly oppose bill SB 87 because passing this bill would take money and opportunities from the rural communities that make up most of Kansas and redistribute to people who have access to many more opportunities as it is.

Though my four sons, who attend USD 232 De Soto, have plenty of public and private school options available to them in Shawnee, my niece and nephew, who attend USD 109 Republic County, do not. By implementing SB 87, money and resources would be redistributed to the settings that have private schools available, mainly urban settings, leaving those without these options to pay for it.

More succinctly, my primary concerns with bill SB 87 are:

- 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 private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice anyway.
- A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system.
- There are no controls in place to ensure those receiving these tax credits are providing the children with a quality education or any education at all. Kansans expect accountability for how our tax dollars are being used.
- Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.

In closing, as written, SB 87 is not fair to all Kansans, and has few safeguards to prevent fraud. Our rural communities desperately need their public schools to survive and thrive, and SB 87 will very likely have the exact opposite impact on these communities. Legislature should not be diverting public dollars to private schools when special education is underfunded.

Please vote NO on bill SB 87.

Jamie Mast
Parent
Shawnee, KS

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to ask you to PLEASE vote NO on voucher bill SB 87. Public tax dollars are meant for public goods like our public schools. These bills reduce 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.

Our tax dollars would be better served by fully funding special education which will benefit all kids attending public schools. Again, I ask that you vote NO on SB 87.

Also, may I remind you of a little bit of history regarding private schools in America; private schools were created to maintain racial segregation with the federal court's dismantling "separate but equal." (Southern [education.org](https://www.southerneducation.org))

Private schools are a privilege in today's America. Taking public tax dollars away from public schools and handing those dollars to private schools will not only increase the risk of widening the equal education gap, but also increase the risk of those dollars (unregulated in the private schools) being misused; allowing discrimination to happen.

I kindly request confirmation that my written testimony has been received and added to the relevant conferee list.

Thank you.

"Good people care about their children...great people care about other people's children."

Chelsea McBride
Mother of 3 in Mission, Kansas

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Jennifer Meyer-McCall

TITLE: Kansas Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: jennymeyermccall@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,

Please oppose SB 87.

When you give tax credits/deductions for scholarships to private schools, you are giving our tax money to support private businesses and religious institutions at the expense of public education. This program is doing real harm to our communities, please do not expand it. If you actually have tax money to spare, please expand special education!

We are counting on you to support the common good, and to vote NO on bill SB 87.

Please confirm confirmation that my testimony has been received and added to the written testimony list.

Thank you,
Jennifer Meyer-McCall
Kansas Parent
Prairie Village

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Brittany McLaughlin

TITLE: parent, Kansas Citizen, bank employee

EMAIL ADDRESS: Brittany.b.McLaughlin@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: 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.

I attended public school and have kids attending now. I also am someone who understands the value of our public schools to an educated society and to the vitality of our communities. Public schools allow all kids to have access to quality education. They also provide them with experiences culturally and demographically what a private school doesn't allow due to their standards. Kids need access to diversity and to learn to work with all kinds of abilities, beliefs and opinions.

I oppose this bill because 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 diverts tax payer dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions. 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.

Also, we shouldn't be diverting public dollars to private schools when special education is underfunded.

Please vote no on bill SB 87.

Brittany McLaughlin

Mom, community member, emphatic human, bank employee

Prairie Village

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Claire McMurray

TITLE: Dr.

EMAIL ADDRESS: mcmurrayclaire@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.

My youngest daughter, Josephine, benefits greatly from special education offerings in the Shawnee Mission School District and is directly affected by state funding for special education. She has complex medical needs that can only be met in the ALC program at Lenexa Hills Elementary. Josephine benefits from having a para, specialized equipment, multiple therapies, and access to a specially trained nurse in her school. She is in a wheelchair, nonverbal, gets nutrition through a feeding tube, uses an eye-gaze device, and has no purposeful hand use. Josephine loves attending school, is integrated into a gen ed classroom, and is a model for her typical peers. There are no private schools in the area that would be equipped to meet her complex medical needs or accept a student like her.

I am asking you to vote no to bill SB 87 because it diverts funding away from students like my daughter and sends it to schools that would never allow someone like her entry. I pay federal, state, and local taxes with the hope that they will fund social and educational services for vulnerable populations. I do not wish my tax dollars to go to vouchers for private education and I am very disappointed in the decision not to fully fund special education. Because she is unable to advocate for herself, I am advocating on her behalf and sharing her story with you.

Please vote no to bill number SB 87 and help people like Josephine. We need more funding for public school programs like hers and fewer tax cuts for people who attend schools she will never be allowed to attend.

Sincerely,

Claire McMurray

Ph.D.

Lenexa



House Committee on Education

Opponent Testimony (Written Only) SB 87

March 9, 2025

Submitted by: Dr. Tonya Merrigan, Superintendent

Email: tmerrigan@bluevalleyk12.org

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these written comments in opposition to **SB 87**, expanding student eligibility under the tax credit for low-income students scholarship program, increasing the amount of the tax credit for contributions made pursuant to such program and providing for aggregate tax credit limit increases under certain conditions.

Blue Valley has a student population of more than 22,400 and consistently ranks in the top tier of high performing schools, both in the state and in the nation. (See "Quick Facts" at the end of testimony.)

The primary goal of the Blue Valley district is **to ensure every student attending our schools has the educational programming and opportunities, delivered by quality educators, to allow them to thrive long after they leave our doors.** We embrace every student who walks through our doors and always work to provide them with the tools to succeed.

The Blue Valley Board of Education has a long-standing priority position that states:

[Blue Valley] opposes public funding of private schools, including offering public tax credits that decrease state revenue, that do not comply with the same standards and requirements of public-school districts.

As stated in our position, our Board believes that private schools receiving public dollars, even by a decrease in state revenue, must be held to the same standards, requirements, and governance as that required of public schools. In addition, it appears the fiscal note of expanding this program may reach \$20M.

For these reasons, we must **strongly oppose** SB 87.

We would like to express our thanks to this committee for its work toward improved student learning in Kansas and, as well, our commitment to work with the committee toward that end.

USD 229 Blue Valley Schools: Quick Facts

K-12 Student Enrollment	21,767	ACT District Composite Average*	22.9
Early Childhood—grade 12 Enrollment	22,450	ACT Statewide Average	19.2
Average Daily Attendance	94.4%	SAT District Average	1357
Graduation Rate	96.7%	SAT Statewide Average	1256
Teacher's with Master's Degree or Higher	76%	*with 91.6 % of graduates taking ACT	

NAME: Kelly Michael
TITLE: Kansas citizen and parent
EMAIL ADDRESS: klmichael05@yahoo.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written
DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

March 7, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

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

I am a lifelong Kansan and the product of Kansas public schools. After receiving a top-notch education in the Blue Valley School Districts, I went onto college and now have a thriving career in the area. I am certain that absent my public-school education, I would not have been successful in college and in my career. I am the mother of a high school and middle school in the Blue Valley School District. I have **no interest whatsoever** in sending my children to private schools. Not only do I strongly believe in the value of public education, the caliber of private schools in Kansas is mediocre, at best, and there are very few secular options.

Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will only harm Kansans. I strongly oppose subsidizing the private choices of some parents and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas. Special education must be 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. **Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education.**

Please vote NO on bill SB 87.

I am also available on March 10 to testify via WebEx.

Kelly Michael
Overland Park, Kansas

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Samantha Monsees

TITLE: Kansas citizen and parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: samanthamonsees@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

March 7, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

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

I am a lifelong Kansan and the product of Kansas public schools. After receiving a top-notch education in the Shawnee Mission and Blue Valley School Districts, I went onto college and law school and now have a thriving law practice. I am certain that absent my public-school education, I would not have been successful in college and certainly not in law school. I am the mother of a kindergartner in the Shawnee Mission School District. I have **no interest whatsoever** in sending my children to private schools. Not only do I strongly believe in the value of public education, the caliber of private schools in Kansas is mediocre, at best, and there are very few secular options.

Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will only harm Kansans. I strongly oppose subsidizing the private choices of some parents and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas. Special education must be 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. **Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education.**

I am also available on March 10 to testify via WebEx.

Please vote NO on bill SB 87.

I am also available on March 10 to testify via WebEx.

Samantha Monsees
Mission, Kansas

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Amy Moore

TITLE: parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: amooredunn@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

Dear Chair Estes and members of the committee,

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

I strongly oppose SB 87. Eighteen years ago, my family specifically chose to move to Kansas for its excellent public schools. We have three children – one who graduated in 2023, another graduating in 2025, and our youngest in 2029. Our experience with Kansas public schools has been outstanding, particularly regarding special education services that our child received – services unavailable at local private schools. In fact, we regularly saw private school students coming to our public elementary school to access these essential services.

Public funds must remain in public schools for one fundamental reason: public schools serve ALL Kansas children. While private schools selectively choose their students, public schools welcome everyone. Most private institutions lack the resources and infrastructure to support students with special needs or English language learners. Furthermore, private schools operate without the rigorous oversight and accountability measures that ensure taxpayer dollars are properly invested in quality education.

In conclusion, public money should stay in public schools. Voucher programs effectively become subsidies for wealthy families while lacking proper oversight and accountability. There is no need for expansion when there are still hundreds of thousands of students eligible under the current guidelines who are not utilizing scholarships.

Please vote no on bill SB 87

Amy Moore

Parent in the Shawnee Mission School District

Prairie Village

Taryn Myers
Kansas Citizen and USD 266 parent
tarynmyers@gmail.com
SB 87
Written Testimony Only
Opponent
House Education Committee
March 10, 2025

Dear Chair Estes and members of the committee:

This is my written testimony for strong opposition to SB 87. I would appreciate confirmation that my testimony has been received.

As a parent of two children in USD 266, Maize, Kansas—one in 7th grade and the other in 10th—I have seen firsthand both the strengths and struggles of our public schools. In addition to my role as a parent, I spent five years working as an elementary school paraprofessional and currently substitute teach in USD 266. My experience within the public school system has been overwhelmingly positive, but it has also opened my eyes to the many challenges our schools face.

Public schools already operate on limited resources, doing their best with what little they have. SB 87 would only make this situation worse, further draining funding from schools that are already struggling. As the President of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), with eight years at the elementary level and four years—and counting—at the middle school level, I have witnessed firsthand how schools rely on community support to fill critical gaps. Unfortunately, not all schools have the benefit of a strong PTO to supplement their needs.

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. This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public school that serve **ALL** kids and gives it to families who have made a personal choice to receive a religious or other non-public education.

This bill disproportionately harms low-income families and rural communities. It primarily benefits the wealthy while placing an even greater burden on those already struggling. Reading through the tax credits outlined in this bill is heartbreaking because I see firsthand the students it will leave behind. Rural students (and communities) will be 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. SB 87 does not take care of the MAJORITY of Kansas kids.

I urge you to reconsider the long-term consequences this bill will have on our public schools and the families who depend on them. Please vote no to bill SB 87. Thank you for your time and for the work you do for our state.

Sincerely,

Taryn Myers

Maize, KS 67101

Kansas Citizen and USD 266 parent

tarynmyers@gmail.com

NAME: Kristina Nash

TITLE: Mom, Kansas Citizen, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner

EMAIL ADDRESS: knashRN@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,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. This bill represents a tax cut for the wealthy and will decrease funding for public schools. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools, as this money is used to educate all children. We should not be expanding a program that already funnels taxpayer dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions.

Bill SB 87 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 or other non-public education.

Public school education provides education to all children no matter their socioeconomic class or religious beliefs. It provides all children with the opportunity to grow, thrive, and be prepared to play a bigger role in society after graduation. It is investing in our children today for the benefit of our community in the future. Public schools allow children to learn in a diverse system that will prepare them for a diverse work environment. Children can learn from a variety of experiences and not be tied to one singular belief system. Public education provides a wide variety of class options that can provide a gateway to join society after graduation.

This bill will divert funds from public schools which in turn will decrease support and resources for many children. Most children will not attend a private school. Those that can afford a private school can already do so without taxpayer dollars. That is the point. If the family prefers to attend a private school, they can use their own money.

Private schools have their own set of rules. Private schools will be able to use funds for education in varying ways without any standards. It leads to a lack of accountability.

If the goal is to make private school more accessible, it won't. Private school is expensive and divides socioeconomic status. This will just divide it more. Private schools can choose who they allow in, meaning those with special needs, a lower educational level, and those with lack of funds to pay will be excluded. These families rely on public schools to provide education for their children. Why take this away? Seems cruel.

Shifting funding will greatly impact programs that provide resources for kids with special needs. What is the plan for these children when there are no funds to support their needs?

I strongly encourage you to vote against SB 87 for our children.

Kristina Nash

Mom, Kansas Citizen, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner

Shawnee, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Mandy Neddo

TITLE: Kansas Citizen and parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: mbeeson_2000@yahoo.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 currently have twins attending public school in Overland Park, with one twin requiring special education services currently and in the future. I am opposing this bill because instead of diverting money to private schools, we should be fully funding special education. Those special education students, including my son, have proven they require these services out of necessity and these children should not be penalized by services being underfunded.

The current theme of this country seems to be that the wealthy prevail while others are left to constantly be in a state of struggle. This Tax Credit Scholarship program allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors. The Tax Credit Scholarship program, like most voucher programs, is literally welfare for the wealthy. Why should more funds be diverted from improving public education? Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education.

My plea to you is to vote no on bill SB 87.

Mandy Neddo

Kansas Citizen, parent

Overland Park

Testimony to the House Education Committee

Adrienne Newlin

Kansas citizen; parent of public school student

adrienne.newlin@gmail.com

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. I am a small business owner, homeowner and parent who understands the value of strong public schools in our community. 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. 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.

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 or other non-public education.

Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education.

I ask that you VOTE NO on SB 87.

Adrienne Newlin

Overland Park, KS

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

Joan Nicholas, Parent of 3 Shawnee Mission School District Graduates

getorganized2010@att.net

Bill SB 87 Opponent, Written Testimony

March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & members of the committee,

I appreciate you listening to the testimony of the people of Kansas on policies that impact all of us. **I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 87.**

My sons received an excellent education in the SMSD public school system, and they graduated well prepared for success in their next steps in life. Importantly, you and all the people of Kansas and around the country who now work with my sons benefit from the stellar education public schools provided them.

I firmly believe that public tax dollars should remain with our public schools because:

- Public schools accept and educate all children ~ regardless of special needs, income, privilege, culture, beliefs, or any other barrier a private institution can put in place to reject a child from their system.
- Special education is already severely under-funded in Kansas and taking more tax dollars away from public schools will significantly impact the most vulnerable children in our state.
- Public schools are accountable to taxpayers through certifications, testing scores and other measures and ways private institutions and homeschooling are not.
- Many families who choose private education can afford the tuition; they do not need their choice subsidized by my tax dollars.
- Many rural areas of Kansas do not have private school options nearby.
- Education Tax Credits divert money that could be used to improve public education. Therefore, this bill will have the same negative impact on our children's public education as a voucher program.

We are all better when we have well-educated kids. If you pass SB 87 or other policies that take money away from tax-funded public education you are hurting yourself, your family, your constituents, and beyond by reducing the numbers of well-educated citizens. **ANY policy that takes public tax dollars away from public schools hurts the entire community.**

PLEASE VOTE NO ON BILL SB 87! Please confirm receipt of my testimony and its addition to the relevant conferee list.

Joanie Nicholas, Parent

Leawood, Kansas

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Joseph Nicholas

TITLE: Private citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: joseph.h.nicholas@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: SB 87 - Expanding student eligibility under the tax credit

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opposition to bill SB 87.

I oppose this bill for several reasons:

First, this bill will reduce funding for cash-strapped public schools and fund cash rich private schools. To be honest, it is shameful for a state that has historically had a well-funded, exemplary educational system to now have a system where public-school teachers regularly provide teaching supplies from their own pocket.

Second, this bill will increase the education gap between the haves and have-nots. As funds are taken away from public schools and given to private schools, the quality of education in Kansas public schools will undoubtedly decline. This will lead to more families who can afford private education sending their children to private schools, which, in turn, will further reduce funding for public schools. Eventually, we will be left with a two tier system where wealthy children have access to adequate education, and poor children do not. As we learned from Brown vs Topeka Board of Education "separate but equal" is not constitutional; "separate but unequal" is even worse.

Third, this bill, if enacted, will lead to a pointless waste of taxpayer dollars in defending inevitable lawsuits. Without a doubt, this legislation will be challenged, which could lead to a protracted and expensive court battle. Our current Attorney General is certainly not one to shy away from any lawsuit that garners him additional media exposure, but he doesn't have the best track record in winning them.

In short, this bill is nothing more than an attempted tax dodge by the wealthy at the cost of our children's education. I urge you to vote no on SB 87 for the good of public education in Kansas.

Thank you for your time,
Joseph Nicholas
Leawood, 66206

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Rae A. Nicholson

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, Parent, Child Welfare Attorney

EMAIL ADDRESS: rae@raenicholsonlaw.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,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 87. As a parent in Kansas and an attorney that focuses on child welfare, often acting as a guardian ad litem for the most vulnerable children in our state, this is a bill that has to be stopped.

My child is a student in Shawnee Mission public schools. Nearly every child I serve in foster care are children in public schools across our state. I understand the value of public schools and the much-needed funding that supports our children, including those most in need of services throughout our state.

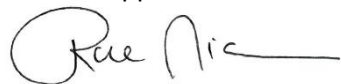
Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will divert even more much needed funds from our public education. This program allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors throughout our state. Make no mistake, this program does not help the children in our state that need our help most; this program is nothing more than welfare for the wealthy.

Public tax dollars must remain in our public schools. Those schools educate and accept ALL children in our state. Private schools lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate during the admission process. As someone that serves the neediest children in our state, I can guarantee that this bill HARMS those children.

Instead of providing tax credits to wealthy donors to fund private schools, this legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education and help the children in our state that need this help the most.

Please consider not just those in our state that have the money to send their children to private schools, rather consider the children in our state that rely on public education to serve their needs. Your vote on this bill is vital to ensuring the most vulnerable children in our state can get the education they require.

Please support the children in our state and vote NO on SB 87.



Rae A. Nicholson
Parent, Kansas Citizen, and Child Welfare Attorney
Prairie Village, Kansas

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Lane Odle

TITLE: Parent in Shawnee Mission School District

EMAIL ADDRESS: lane@dottedlinemarketing.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Testimony

DATE OF HEARING: March 10, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill SB 75. For decades, my mother worked in the public school system, serving children of all walks of life. I've seen how access to an equitable education can be transformative for Kansas kids and families.

As a product of the public school system, I was proud to enroll my daughter in the Shawnee Mission School District. She has had great teachers and diverse experiences, building friendships with kids who have special needs and are neurotypical – many of whom would not be supported at a private school.

Despite our positive experience, I've seen firsthand how limited budgets and resources have impacted the quality of education. Offering vouchers for families, who have elected to opt out of the public school system, is not sustainable. Kansas can barely afford to fund its current schools. Across the state, aging buildings need updates, teachers are missing supplies, and schools are understaffed. Moving to a multi-school system would strip our state of one of its most valuable resources – educational access for all.

My family and I do not support bill SB 75, because it is harmful to Kansas kids, educators, and the future of our state.

Thank you,

Lane Odle
Parent
Leawood, KS

House Committee on Education

SUBJECT: SB 87 Written-Only Opposition Testimony

NAME: Bonita Oliva

EMAIL ADDRESS: bonita_oliva@ruraltel.net

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

OPPONENT

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 opposed to diverting any public funding to Private schooling or education. I have numerous great grand children who attend public schools in Kansas. These schools are always short on funding. Please do not vote to divert any money away from public education. That is one of the founding principles of this nation-the right to a free and public education. Please vote no on bill 87.

Bonita Oliva
Woodston
Kansas