

Caitlin DeFilippo

Public School Educator/Public School Parent

House Bill 2468 - Written\_Only Testimony in Opposition

Date of Committee Hearing: January 21, 2026

Dear Chairperson Estes and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **opposition to House Bill 2468**. This legislation represents a significant and fiscally irresponsible expansion of the Tax Credit Scholarship program that threatens the stability of our public education system and creates a permanent, uncapped drain on both state and federal resources.

## **I. Opposition to Increasing the State Tax Credit Cap**

HB 2468 seeks to double the current cap on the Tax Credit Scholarship program from \$10 million to \$20 million. We oppose this expansion for the following reasons:

- **Public Funds for Public Schools:** Public tax dollars belong in the public schools that are mandated to educate *every* child. Expanding this program reduces the state's general fund and undermines our ability to meet the constitutional requirement to adequately fund Kansas public schools.
- **Neglect of Special Education:** The legislature continues to fall short of its statutory obligation to fully fund Special Education. We should not be subsidizing private institutions—which can "pick and choose" their students—while our public schools struggle to provide federally mandated services for students with disabilities.
- **Lack of Accountability:** This program provides no oversight for our tax dollars. There are currently no requirements to collect academic data or measure the progress of students receiving these vouchers. We are essentially writing a blank check to private entities with no proof of educational outcomes.
- **Failure to Serve At-Risk Students:** The original intent was to help low-income, at-risk students. However, those students are not guaranteed the opportunity to be educated in private school. Therefore, this bill would exacerbate the problem of inequity in our state in regards to educational opportunities for all children.

## **II. Opposition to Opting into the Federal Voucher Program**

HB 2468 would require Kansas to opt into the new federal voucher program established by the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" (OBBBA). This is a dangerous policy shift:

- **Unprecedented Fiscal Risk:** Unlike the Kansas program, the federal program has **no aggregate cap**. While individual donations are capped at \$1,700, there is no limit on the

total number of credits issued. Congressional estimates suggest this could result in a **\$4 billion annual loss** in federal revenue—money that should be directed toward IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) funding.

- **Vouchers for the Wealthy:** The federal program allows scholarships for families making up to **300% of their area's median income**. In counties like Johnson County, this could mean families earning over \$300,000 a year would receive public subsidies for private tuition. This is not "targeted aid"; it is a tax loophole for the affluent.
- **100% Tax Credits vs. Charitable Giving:** This is not a standard deduction; it is a **100% dollar-for-dollar tax credit**. This gives donors their entire contribution back from the government, providing a benefit far beyond what any typical Kansas citizen receives for charitable donations.

## **Conclusion**

Kansas should be focused on strengthening the public school system that serves 90% of our children. By doubling the state cap and opting into an uncapped federal program, HB 2468 prioritizes private interests over the public good and creates a fiscal "black hole" that will haunt the state budget for years to come.

We respectfully request that the Committee **vote NO on HB 2468**.

**Respectfully submitted,**

Caitlin DeFilippo

Public School Teacher and Parent

345 Indiana Street, Lawrence

**January 21, 2027**

**Testimony to the House Education Committee**

**NAME:** Danielle Voorhees George; parent

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** dvoorhees24@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** HB 2428

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** OPPONENT

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** WRITTEN ONLY

Chair and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my opposition to HB 2468; as a parent of a child in public school this is very important to me.

I oppose HB 2468 because it diverts public tax dollars away from Kansas public schools and toward private schools with little to no accountability. Doubling the cap on this already unnecessary program will continue to undefined funding for public schools when the government is already not fulfilling its obligation to fully fund special education.

HB 2468 also requires Kansas to opt into a new federal voucher program with no spending cap and an unknown fiscal impact. Public education funds should be used to strengthen public schools, not subsidize private ones.

In closing, thank you again and I urge you to vote NO on HB 2468.

Danielle Voorhees George

Spring Hill, KS

**NAME:** Marcel Harmon

**TITLE:** Kansas citizen, parent, and former School Board Member / President (USD 497)

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** [marcelharmon@gmail.com](mailto:marcelharmon@gmail.com)

**BILL NUMBER:** HB 2468

**PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL:** Opponent

**ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:** Written Only Testimony

**DATE OF HEARING:** January 21, 2026

Chair Estes and members of the committee,

Thank you for allowing me to share my opponent testimony against HB 2468. My name is Marcel Harmon, and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on HB 2468.

Both of my kids attended public school (USD 497) with the youngest graduating high school in 2023. I'm a former school board member of USD 497. I have volunteered on local and state education committees and tasks forces for a large portion of my adult life, and as a consultant have spent a significant amount of time in public schools for most of my professional career. My parents were both public school teachers (my mom was also a grade school librarian). I know the value of public education to the state of Kansas and its importance to the vitality of our communities.

I have grouped my opposition points into the following topics.

**Doubling the current cap on the existing Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program:**

- The original intent of the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program was to provide private school tuition vouchers for low-income, at-risk students. Although less than 1% of the eligible low-income students in Kansas were granted scholarships from private schools through the program, the legislative leadership's efforts to expand the income limits succeeded in the program now approaching the \$10 million cap. Had the expansion of income limits to include those who don't need the help not been done, there would be no "reason" to increase the cap to \$20 million.

**Public tax dollars belong with public schools:**

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools primarily because a) they accept and educate ALL children (private schools can pick and choose which children they want to serve) and b) they are accountable to the taxpayers. Accountability is a critical part of spending public dollars, as many conservative legislators are fond of pointing out. Private and homeschooled lack the oversight necessary to confirm whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children.
- Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship Program will divert even more funds from public education to subsidize private education, have the same negative impact as a voucher program. This diversion of funds harms public education along with the students served by public schools. This can be particularly harmful for our rural communities as their resources are drained, with little to no private options available. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for urban families.
- Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans who choose not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education (currently underfunded, which is having a significant negative impact on district operations and meeting ALL student needs).
- Families with children with special needs, disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language will not benefit from this tax credit expansion as few private schools can accommodate their needs. And taking money away from public schools will make it harder for them to adequately meet the needs of these families and their students. This is extremely inequitable, negatively impacting many of those already struggling the most.

**Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy:**

- Vouchers, tax credit scholarships, etc., take 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. This program already allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors. Expanding the tax credit to 100% is even more egregious. *The Tax Credit Scholarship program, like most voucher programs, is welfare for the wealthy.*

**Public schools are a public good:**

- A strong public education system benefits ALL of society, not just the individual students who make use of it. This is because public schools are a public service – a common pool resource – providing good quality education to EVERYONE, regardless of socio-economic status. A strong public education system ensures we have citizenry capable of maintaining our communities and society as a whole. 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 and putting this critical common pool resource at risk.
- Each successive generation can also be viewed as a common pool resource because the continuity, success, and vitality of our communities, economies, and institutions depends on the success of each generation of students and our ability to educate and prepare them for the world. Because private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind in the process, they take away from that common pool resource society depends on.

#### **Requiring Kansas to opt in to the new federal level voucher program**

- Under the new federal level voucher program, “donors” can contribute up to \$1,700 to a Scholarship Granting Organization and receive a 100% tax credit (i.e., direct reduction of their tax liability). This is a much bigger benefit than the tax deductions we all receive for charitable donations.
- Because there is no cap on the federal program, the true fiscal impact is unknown, though congressional estimates (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/03/us/federal-voucher-program-congress-private-school-tuition.html>) suggest the program could result in as much as \$4 billion in lost revenue a year. The federal government is already not meeting its obligation to fully fund special education, and this will just increase the likelihood it continues underfunding special education.

Below are some relevant sources of information if you’re interested. I thank you all for reviewing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no on the passage of HB 2468 out of committee.

Marcel Harmon  
Lawrence, KS

## Relevant Sources of Information

- State and local experience proves school vouchers are a failed policy that must be opposed: <https://www.epi.org/blog/state-and-local-experience-proves-school-vouchers-are-a-failed-policy-that-must-be-opposed-as-voucher-expansion-bills-gain-momentum-look-to-public-school-advocates-for-guidance/>
- State Policymakers Should Reject K-12 School Voucher Plans: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/state-policymakers-should-reject-k-12-school-voucher-plans>
- School Vouchers: A Survey of the Economics Literature: <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jel.20150679>
- Summary of Research on School Vouchers: <https://education.indiana.edu/research/centers/ceep/education-policy/policy-briefs/2023/research-on-school-vouchers.html>
- Public dollars should fund public schools (from the National Coalition for Public Education): <https://www.ncpecoalition.org/>
- Private School Choice: What the Research Says: <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/private-school-choice-what-the-research-says/2024/10>



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Melanie Haas  
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District 5

Beryl New  
District 6

Dennis Hershberger  
District 7

Betty J. Arnold  
District 8

Jim Porter  
District 9

Debby Potter  
District 10

1/21/2025

**Opponent Testimony for House Bill 2468**  
House Committee on Education  
Cathy Hopkins and Beryl New, Legislative Liaisons  
Kansas State Board of Education

Chair Estes and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony regarding House Bill 2468 on behalf of the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education voted to prioritize only using public funds for public schools in the Board's 2026 Legislative Priorities. House Bill 2486 is counter to this priority by providing funding that would otherwise be available for public schools to families that choose to enroll their children in private schools.

Based on the November Consensus estimates, the State of Kansas is currently out spending its revenues. By adding new tax credits and raising the limits on existing tax credits, the legislature is diverting potential tax proceeds that could be used to meet its obligation to public school students.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our testimony,

Cathy Hopkins

Beryl New

*Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.*

1/21/2026

Testimony to the House Education Committee

Hannah Howard  
hannahhoward916@gmail.com  
HB 2468  
OPPONENT WRITTEN ONLY  
PRIVATE CITIZEN

Dear Chair Estes and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on HB 2468. My name is Hannah Howard and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on HB 2468.

This bill expands voucher programs at the expense of our public education system, which serves the vast majority of students in our state. Public schools are legally required to serve every child, including students with disabilities and those who need special education services. Voucher programs do not provide the same protections, accountability, or guaranteed services for students with special needs, leaving many families without the support their children require.

I attended private schools growing up, and when I went to college, I was astonished by how limited the supports at my Catholic grade school and high school were for students with disabilities compared to what college could offer. That experience made clear to me how uneven and inadequate special education services can be in voucher-funded and private settings.

Instead of expanding vouchers, the legislature should focus on fully funding public education and strengthening special education services for all students. Our public schools are the backbone of our communities, and this bill weakens that foundation. Please vote no on HB 2468.

Hannah Howard  
Merriam, KS

January 21, 2026

House Education Committee

**NAME:** Alyx Hubler, Kansas Citizen

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** alyx.hubler@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** HB 2468

**OPPONENT**

**WRITTEN ONLY**

Chair and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opposition to bill 2468.

The original intent of the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program was to provide private school tuition vouchers for low-income, at-risk students. Although less than 1% of the eligible low-income students in Kansas have been granted scholarships from private schools through the program. Because private schools can pick and choose which students to admit, under the expanded income limits they can more easily skip over at-risk kids and provide scholarships to kids who better fit their admission criteria. Expansion of this program is not needed.

Public dollars belong with our public schools that educate all children. Expanding this program reduces the state budget and undermines the state's ability to adequately fund Kansas public schools.

Education funds should go towards fully funding special education, not subsidizing private schools that can pick and choose which students they are willing to educate.

**Expanding this program will continue to put low-income, at-risk kids at a disadvantage as they continue to be skipped over in favor of students who better fit private school admission criteria.**

We should not be expanding a program that provides no accountability for our tax dollars. There are no requirements within the program to collect data or measure the progress of students receiving scholarships.

The legislature has been asking the federal government to fully fund their share of special education. We should not opt into a program that will direct federal dollars to private schools while knowing the federal government is not meeting its obligation to fund special education.

Please vote no on bill number HB 2468.

Alyx Hubler

Shawnee, KS

January 21, 2026

House Education Committee

**NAME:** Thomas Hubler, Kansas Citizen

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** thad.hubler@gmail.com

**BILL NUMBER:** HB 2468

**OPPONENT**

**WRITTEN ONLY**

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The legislature has been asking the federal government to fully fund their share of special education. We should not opt into a program that will direct federal dollars to private schools while knowing the federal government is not meeting its obligation to fund special education.

Please vote no on bill number HB 2468.

Thomas Hubler

Shawnee, KS

**From:** [Katie Karr](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** HB 2468  
**Date:** Monday, January 19, 2026 7:23:05 PM

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You don't often get email from [katiekarr@gmail.com](mailto:katiekarr@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear House Education Committee,

I am writing as a Kansas constituent to express my opposition to HB 2468.

Public schools are the backbone of our communities and deserve stable, fully funded support. Expanding voucher funding diverts limited public resources away from the schools that serve the vast majority of Kansas students, while reducing accountability and transparency for taxpayer dollars.

I respectfully urge you to oppose HB 2468 and instead prioritize policies that strengthen and fully fund Kansas public schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Katie Karr  
7301 Canterbury St, Prairie Village, KS 66208

Kylie Kilmer  
Regarding HB2468  
January 17, 2026

Dear Education Committee,

My name is Kylie Kilmer, and I am a homeschooling parent and public school advocate. Our family homeschooled our oldest child from kindergarten to second grade, and it's possible we may consider homeschooling again for our children who are not yet school age.

I oppose HB2468.

My background as a homeschooling parent and public educator is complex and deeply personal. Our family has always strived to forge a path forward that best fits our individual needs, and we respect the choices that families have when it comes to educating their children.

This bill would be devastating to rural schools, who are already facing hardships, consolidations, and staffing shortages. As a graduate of public schools, this bill would have done nothing helpful to support families in the rural district I grew up in. Homeschool families were limited as most of us grew up in households with two working parents to make ends meet in blue collar and low-wage work. The tax credit is not enough to make up the difference for a working parents to stay home to provide the education. Private schools were not an option, and the nearest private school to my hometown was 40 minutes away in one direction with no transportation options.

Kansas is a destination state for homeschooling families due to parents' current freedom to educate their children in the best way they see fit without proving teaching credentials, annual reporting, or testing requirements. As a homeschool parent, it is incredibly concerning that the government is inserting themselves into the homeschool sphere, which has historically been independent from governmental oversight. This bill should concern all homeschool parents that their education is now under the purview of the state and federal government, and potentially risks much more scrutiny and oversight with reporting measures to track waste, abuse, and fraud through these educational tax credits. Where there is free money, there is (or will be) government oversight.

For these reasons, I oppose HB2468. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kylie Kilmer, MS.Ed  
Abilene, KS

Testimony to the House Elections Committee

January 21, 2026

Bill HB 2468 Opponent

Melissa Kochen MS, ATR-BC, Parent

[Melissaangsten@gmail.com](mailto:Melissaangsten@gmail.com)

Chair & Members of the Committee,

I'm writing to voice my opposition to bill 2468. This country's greatness is in part due to the quality of public school education. We need to keep public school funding for public schools. Please vote no on bill 2468.

Melissa Kochen MS, ATR-BC, Parent

Overland Park, KS