

I am Allison Reed, Treasurer for Stop the Bond – Hutchinson. I am testifying today in complete support of HB2451.

Last year, USD 308 had a school bond on the ballot with over 200 million dollars in property tax increases. I was always personally against this tax increase, but as the campaign went on, it became more about all the taxpayer money the District was spending to benefit the Vote Yes campaign and to influence the school bond election in their favor.

First, there was an eight page, full-color, glossy mailer which the District called “informational”, funded by the taxpayer with statements like, “key goals”, “improve kindergarten readiness”, “strengthen middle school academics”, and “the proposed solutions move us forward in our strategic priorities.” This is not information; this is marketing for a desired outcome and using taxpayer resources to do so.

Next, there were the videos. Videos used by both the District and the Vote Yes campaign.

The District and the Campaign claimed the videos were “informational.”

Transcript from the video includes...

“We will need a new building to do that.”

“To provide the best for our children, I think we need to capitalize on that.”

“To make things more efficient, I think that would be best.”

“Why settle when we can soar.”

Next came a newspaper article with the revelation that all the Vote Yes yard signs were purchased with taxpayer money. These signs were also used to raise funds for the Vote Yes campaign.

As part of Stop the Bond, I felt like our campaign was running an IG Hotline for complaints of how the District was using taxpayer resources.

Additional complaints included...

Pushing the bond at Parent/Teacher Conferences

Having Vote Yes signs prominently displayed in the entrances and hallways of schools

Having Vote Yes signs outside on the grounds of multiple school buildings

Sending Vote Yes signs home with students with the instructions to place in their yards

Having teachers wear buttons during the school day with the same logo the Vote Yes campaign was using on social media.

Hutchinson Public Schools Facebook ads that were linked to pro-bond information.

Working with the PTO and the Vote Yes committee to electioneer on school property the week of the vote. Vote Yes t-shirts were worn and additional signs were seen with Support the Bond and even kids with invest in my future, Vote Yes.

Finally, Text messages reminding people to vote. Again, all of this at taxpayer expense.

USD 308 has responded to my complaint. They will only admit to spending \$4,402 on signs, \$10,592 on mailers and \$3,060 for those mailers to be distributed by our local Chamber. They claim no taxpayer money funded the videos that were produced.

Vote Yes for Hutch Kids has yet to file any financial informational relating to their campaign in support of the bond.

Finally, USD 308 will be spending almost \$30,000 in taxpayer money for a survey to find out why their school district didn't vote for their bond.

As a legislator, you would never fund your opponent's campaign, I humbly ask you to remove the ability for school districts to use taxpayer money to influence school bond elections to their benefit. Thank you.