

Proponent Testimony of S.B. 75

For the Senate Education Committee

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Samuel Milner

Student, Maranatha Christian Academy

Chair Erikson, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of Senate Bill 75 on behalf of Maranatha Christian Academy.

My name is Samuel Milner, and I am a 15-year-old student. I have attended Maranatha Christian Academy since the fourth grade. Before Maranatha, I went to a public elementary school in northeast Kansas. Following the passing of my father, my mother sought a school environment that would best support my emotional and educational needs. As a single parent, my mother has made significant sacrifices to ensure my brother and I could attend Maranatha. I recognize that the cost of private education is prohibitive for many families. Therefore, I am here today to request your support for the Education Opportunity Expansion for all Kansans.

As of the 2023-2024 academic year, the Department of Education reports that approximately 565,000 students are enrolled in public and private schools across the state. It is estimated that 81,000 students are enrolled in non-accredited and accredited private schools. For those students who require a private school environment, such as smaller class sizes, but whose families cannot afford it, it is imperative that we do not eliminate this choice.

I wish to clarify that my intention is not to suggest that all students should attend private schools. Public schools offer excellent opportunities for most students across the state, providing superb athletic and educational programs. However, for students for whom public school is not the optimal environment, this tax credit would enable them to attend the school that best meets their needs.

There is a widespread misconception that only affluent families enroll their children in private schools. Many believe that the wealthy do not need another tax break. Nevertheless, Maranatha has provided over \$400,000 in financial relief this year, and many other private schools across the state have undertaken similar efforts. I am appealing to you on behalf of students, single parents, and educators throughout Kansas to pass the Education Opportunity Expansion Tax Credit.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to stand for questions.