

Testimony in the Opposition to Bill SB 75 Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Holly Hagman
Parent of students in the SMSD School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill SB 75.

Both my children, my husband, my parents, and myself are all products of the public school system. My husband is a firefighter, my father an attorney, and I hold a master's degree. The voucher program would take public tax dollars away from public schools where it belongs. Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program. 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. 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 that is currently underfunded by \$173 million. I know many families who rely on the public school education to assist their special needs children and allow them to work and provide for their families with the necessary support.

Vouchers tend to be for the wealthy and do nothing to support the families who really need it. Families who can already afford the choice to send their kids to private school will continue to benefit, while funding for public schools and other state services pay the price.

This will create yet another opportunity for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden through tax credits for private education. It will be another way for them to avoid paying their fair share while the middle class takes on the burden and pays more than they can afford.

I grew up in a small town in Western Kansas and this will greatly impact their public school resources. There are no private options where I grew up.

In closing, please vote no on Bill SB 75. It is unfair and favors those with money.

Thank you for your time and attention to this very important matter.

Holly Hagman

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Lynn Hardy, LynnGHardy@gmail.com

Private Citizen, Kansas Resident for 40+ years

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

First, I want to thank you for your service and dedication to Kansas and your diligence in considering what is best for our GREAT STATE.

I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 75. In considering this Bill, I want to express my dissatisfaction because I have a daughter who grew up in KS schools and now serves at a Professor at the University of Texas in the School of Social Work. My daughter and SO MANY THOUSANDS of other young adults have had so much success in life BASED ON their experience in the PUBLIC School System in KS. When I moved to Kansas City from Texas in 1983, I specifically chose to live on the Kansas side of the state line BECAUSE of the schools. My daughter received, I believe, a BETTER, more well-rounded education because she went to PUBLIC SCHOOL.

In KS, we do not have mountains, oceans or year-round warm weather to draw people to our state. What we do have is EXCELLENT PUBLIC EDUCATION. PLEASE do not pass Bill SB75. It will put our state in jeopardy in more than one way in the future!

Public tax dollars belong with public schools:

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate **all** children and that are **accountable to taxpayers**.
- Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program.
- 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
- 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 that is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

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

- We should not reduce state revenues by providing funding for families to funnel that money to **private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve**.

- Families with children with **special needs, disabilities**, or those for whom English is not their first language will not benefit from these tax credits as few private schools can accommodate their needs.
- **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.**

Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy

- Families who can already afford the choice to send their kids to private school will benefit greatly, while funding for public schools and other state services pay the price.
- Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share.
- Do the numbers: \$24,000 credit for 3 kids in school...that's a LOT of tax credit!!! OR A **NICE REFUND FOR THOSE WHO DON'T OWE OVER THE AMOUNT**

Public schools are a public good:

- For many benefiting from these tax credits, especially those with multiple kids, they will receive **annual refunds** and will contribute nothing towards the public goods in our state that all Kansans benefit from.
- **Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools.**
- **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.

No oversight or accountability:

- **Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools 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 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.

Impact on rural areas:

- **Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.**
- These tax credits will primarily benefit 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.
- **Will we eventually just CLOSE our rural schools AND COMMUNITIES???**

For so MANY reasons...we must maintain our AMAZING KANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS! If not for our present-day children, for the future of our GREAT STATE! PLEASE, I implore you to consider all this information before casting a vote for SB 75. And VOTE NO.

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Kerry Hamel KerryLynn04@gmail.com
Parent in Gardner Edgerton School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Good morning, and GO CHIEFS! Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75.

I am a parent of two young children in the Gardner Edgerton USD 231 School District, and both my children started preschool in this district when they were 3 years old. With my oldest, we looked into private as well as public schools. We quickly determined we would not be able to afford private schools, but because of our public preschool, we were able to get him enrolled and start his love of school. He is now in first grade and excelling with math. My youngest was born in 2020 and spent the first two years of his life hardly leaving the house. When he turned 3 we knew it was time to look into preschools for him to help with his social and emotional growth. Our district has a wonderful preschool program and he has thrived exponentially because of this.

Without our public schools my children would not have their love of learning. My youngest would still be home and struggling with social and emotional growth he wasn't receiving from playdates and "Mommy and Me" groups. To take money away from public schools to give to those sending their children to private schools is a gross misuse of funds. Public tax dollars should stay with services that benefit the public, not individuals that are already able to afford private schools.

This is only one example of why I, and so many other Kansas residents with and without children in the public schools, are asking you to vote no on bill SB 75. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Kerry Hamel
Gardner Resident

SB 75 Opposition Testimony (written only)

For the Senate Education Committee

Hearing Date: 1/28/2025

Marcel Harmon, marcelharmon@gmail.com

Private Citizen and former School Board Member / President (USD 497)

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to share my opponent testimony against SB 75. 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 SB 75.

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 task 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 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.

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 homeschools lack the oversight necessary to confirm whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children.
- Education Opportunity Tax Credits, by diverting 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 by \$173 million).
- Families with children with special needs, disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language will not benefit from these tax credits 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:

- 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 (such wealthy families are the ones who will benefit from the tax credits the most).

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.

Relevant Sources of Information

The following are some 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>

Once again, I thank you all for reviewing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no on the passage of SB 75 out of committee.

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025

Jennifer L. Hartwell, hartwell.jennifer@gmail.com

I am a parent of two high school students at Shawnee Mission East High School in Prairie Village, KS
I am writing as a private citizen

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing this testimony in opposition to SB 75 because my children will be negatively impacted by the diversion of education funds away from their public schools. Extensive research on voucher programs (or refundable tax credits) reveal that they are harmful to public education and do not bolster private education. In a review of multiple states with voucher programs, around 70% of the students already attend private school, therefor the voucher ends up being a subsidy to wealthy parents who have already committed ideologically and financially to private school.

States with voucher programs, such as Indiana and Ohio, reveal that students who utilize vouchers have either neutral or negative impacts on their academic achievement. Vouchers do not improve the quality of education.

Vouchers also divert taxpayer money to private schools who may have discriminatory admissions processes (ie, exclusion of LGBTQ students), therefore a violation of civil rights.

States with voucher programs find that the quality of their public schools declines without a subsequent increase in student achievement for students who utilize vouchers at private schools. The net effect of vouchers is money spent without a return.

An insightful and research driven look at this topic can be found in the book “The Privateers: How Billionaires Created A Culture War and Sold School Vouchers”, by Josh Cowen.

Kansas has spent years struggling to recover from the devastating under funding of public schools under Sam Brownback. SB 75 would rapidly undo whatever progress we have made.

My children, a 15 yo son-a freshman and an aspiring surgeon, and 17 yo son-a junior, who relies on support services at school and is on a 504 plan due to a diagnosis of ADHD, would lose support for their current needs and future aspirations.

I urge you to vote NO on SB 75.

Sincerely,

Jennifer L. Hartwell
Prairie Village, KS

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Rev. Dayna Hauschild, dlhauschild@gmail.com
Private Citizen, Clergy UMC, LCPC

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB.

I was raised by a public-school teacher and administrator, so the value of education was instilled in me from birth. I also served as a school counselor in one of the largest districts in the state. Public school provides multiple opportunities for all persons so that they may be equipped to contribute in a positive way to society. B-75 runs counter to this end and thus is not the best option for the students and families in Kansas.

Tax dollars collected by the public need to be utilized by public schools, not private schools. It provides a leveling within a system that otherwise would not be there, and it is vital to good citizenship. Vouchers provide a tax break for those with money and goes counter to the greatness that has built this state. Private schools are not equipped to meet all the needs of the students they serve. Currently, they already utilize the expertise of public schools to help them reach students they do not have the training nor capability to reach. Every child in Kansas deserves to have the same opportunity regardless.

Public education is vital to our future as a democracy. Please vote not on bill SB 75.

Thank you for reading this testimony.

Sincerely,

Rev Dayna Hauschild, LCPC

RE: Testimony on SB 75, Vouchers for Private Schools (Opposition)

To: Senate Education Committee

From: Bill Heatherman, 831 Pierre Street, Manhattan, KS 66502

Date: January 27, 2025

I write in opposition to SB 75, Vouchers for Private Schools. Kansas is blessed with a strong and productive public education system. It has consistently been denied funding and structural support yet continues to do the important work of educating future citizens.

SB75 would deflect taxpayer money to fund private schools that are not held to the same admission or accountability standards of public schools. Private schools can accept or deny students or families with no oversight. Some religious based schools use their doctrines to act in a discriminatory manner and to deny teachers due process.

There is no mandate for private schools to accept these vouchers as full-payment for a student's education – and many will raise tuition, continuing to use private schools as an enclave for the more well-off. It will transfer rural dollars to urban areas. This will devastate our rural and smaller school districts. The legislature is unlikely to fully fund all education needs for Kansan children, so it should stay focused on the public school system.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Brandon Heckart, brandonheckart@gmail.com

Parent in Blue Valley School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for your service to this committee. As a parent with children in the Blue Valley school district, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75.

Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers. 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.

We see the value in our public schools and that they need FULL funding. We hope you see the importance and vote no on bill SB 75.

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Stephanie Heckart, stephanieheckart@gmail.com

Parent in Blue Valley School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for your service to this committee. As a parent with one (soon to be two!) children in the Blue Valley school district, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75.

Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program. Additionally, rural students/communities are harmed as public-school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.

We see the value in our public schools and that they need FULL funding. We hope you see the importance to and vote no on bill SB 75.

January 27, 2025

To the Senate Education Committee::

I would first like to thank you so very much for your time and effort while serving on the Senate Education Committee. The topic of concern is Senate Bill 75. This bill, as you know, will move money from public education to private education. As I read through the bill, I am very concerned about the fact that you want to give money to non-credential organizations. This really waters down our education system, if you have people providing education that are not trained in the field.

I am a retired teacher of 35 years, and this is a slap in the face to say that I did not need any form of education to do my job for 35 years. That is crazy. We need people who have been educated. We need to place that money into the public system and maybe make rules that keep the problems at bay. When I speak to parents that don't send their kids to public school, it is usually because of what is taught and how the school is run. They don't want their kids around lower level troublemakers. So let's take the money and move it so we have a more elitist society, NOT!

Giving this money to the private sector is only going to make the problem worse for our public schools. Private schools are popping up everywhere and who knows what they are teaching and how trained their staff is. With this bill you will encourage more of this to happen and the public school system will be destroyed. Please don't vote for this to happen. Let's figure out a way to make our public education a place that everyone wants to attend. I feel like this is just masking the problem and making it larger than it already has become. Don't be the problem, try to be the solution. Make policies that will raise our public education to what it was when I attended school.

Thank you so much for your time

Lori C. Heger

**SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025**

**Ashleigh Heldstab, aheldstab@outlook.com
Private Citizen and future parent in the Olathe School District (233)**

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for your time and attention. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. There are multiple reasons that factor into my opposition of this bill.

First, 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. In addition, 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 that is currently underfunded by \$173 million. As an occupational therapist, I understand the positive impact that special education plays in allowing every student in need the opportunity to perform at their highest level and reach their, and their loved ones, goals.

Second, and to build on my first point, families with children with special needs, disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language will not benefit from these tax credits as few private schools can accommodate their needs. These private schools also can choose who they admit, leaving many behind. This fact alone does not allow for real choice and directly contradicts the idea of those who may claim to be proponents of this bill.

Third, in this bill, 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. If these students then move to another state and are found to be lacking in appropriate education, this will reflect poorly on Kansas standards. Kansans expect accountability for how our tax dollars are being used.

Fourth, for many benefiting from these tax credits, especially those with multiple kids, they will receive annual refunds and will contribute nothing towards the public goods in our state that all Kansans benefit from. Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools.

Finally, rural students and communities are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options. These tax credits will primarily benefit 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, again, for your time and attention to this matter. I strongly urge you to vote “no” in support of all Kansans.

Ashleigh Heldstab

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025

NAME: Amy Hinrichs

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: aloramy.hinrichs@yahoo.com

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only testimony

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75.

I believe the importance of providing all children with an education is vital to the success of this country and to democracy. Democracy is a government determined by its people. For the voters to guide and direct our country, all children need to have access to a quality education. "American public education is one of the two foundational elements of our democracy. The other is the ballot itself," says Derek W. Black, a professor at the University of South Carolina School of Law. According to the Christian Science Monitor, "...study after study has shown that the more education people have, the more they vote, and the more they participate in a nation's political life." By redirecting funds from public schools to private schools, you are undermining public education and therefore the foundation of our democracy.

Public schools also teach democracy by bringing diverse people together in a shared space with the common goal of learning. Private schools, on the other hand, have the choice of taking a student or not. This often leaves out lower income, disabled, special needs, and those students for whom English isn't their first language.

Furthermore, our tax dollars should not go to private institutions without government oversight and accountability.

Again, I ask you to vote no on bill SB 75.

Amy Hinrichs
Olathe, KS



**Written Opposition Testimony - SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Ron Hobert
President, AFT Kansas**

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. As a 35-year educator and the state president of American Federation of Teachers Kansas, I am in opposition to any legislation, especially SB 75, with the intent of taking away funding from Kansas public schools. We have seen in Arizona and Florida that vouchers are not only disastrous for the educational system, but also very costly to the state budgets and also violate religious freedom.

In recent years, a push to divert public dollars to private schools has intensified across the country through vouchers, K-12 "savings accounts," and tax credits. There are insidious schemes that provide lucrative tax credits for donors that fund scholarships to private schools. In Kansas, vouchers do not support our rural schools.

A free public education for all is perhaps the singular defining virtue of our American society, and vouchers pose a real threat, not just to the soul of public education, but to the very existence of public education itself. American public education is the foundation of our democracy where all children are accepted, regardless of their gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, disability or economic status.

1. Voucher Cost Private School Voucher Costs Are Out of Control — National Coalition for Public Education (NCPE)
2. Religious Freedom Violate Religious Freedom — National Coalition for Public Education (NCPE)
3. Rural America Don't Work in Rural Areas — National Coalition for Public Education (NCPE)

I have mentioned a few of the many reasons why a voucher, tax credit or an education savings account would be horrible for Kansas public schools, the Kansas taxpayer, and

Kansas Association of Public Employees/AFT-Kansas
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for the state budget. There are far too many states experiencing the negative effects of a voucher program. Just to the north of us, Nebraska voters overwhelmingly said "NO!" to a state voucher system.

The system as proposed in SB 75 is wrong for Kansas. It's wrong for our Kansas students, it's wrong for the Kansas taxpayers, and it's wrong for our Kansas communities. AFT Kansas stands in strong opposition to any type of voucher movement and respectfully requests this bill not be advanced.

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SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Veronica Holtz, veroniceeholtz@gmail.com
Parent in Andover School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 75. As an Andover Public School parent and a private school alumnus, I am adamant that tax dollars stay with our public institutions.

I understand how school vouchers sound like a great opportunity for Kansas students, but without proper limitations set within the program, they will not achieve their proposed benefits. Any economist can tell you what happens when you give a set of consumers an injection of funds, prices go up. Just ask parents in North Carolina. So now families who have always paid for private schools will continue paying basically the same, but public school dollars will be flowing to private institutions, many of which are affiliated with religious organizations. This flies in the face of separation of church and state.

Public schools are required to accept and accommodate all students within their district. Private schools do not have this same requirement. This means tax dollars would be funding institutions that aren't available to all. Also, what about all the children who do not live near any private schools, but their local school is being drained of funds at their expense?

SB 75 is NOT good for Kansas kids. Please vote no on this bill.

Thank you for your time,

Veronica Holtz
Wichita, KS

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Payam Honargohar

Parent in 512 school district

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill SB 75.

I ask that you vote no on this bill. Public education is already underfunded in our state. We need more funding, not less. Private schools offer tuition assistance to those families that cannot afford to send their children to the school of their choice. The fact that this bill does not have any income limits on tax credits should require a full stop. Even if there were income limits, I would oppose this bill. Sending your child to a private school is a choice. If a family makes that choice, then they need to take on the financial responsibility that goes with that choice. Public transportation is available to me, but I choose to drive my own car. That choice has financial consequences which I accept. I do not expect the taxpayers to give me a refund because I do not wish to take public transportation.

I ask that you vote no on this bill in any form.

Thank you,

Payam Honargohar

Payam@pvmtg.com

Shawnee, KS 66216

Monday January 27th 2025

Please find attached my written-only opposition testimony for SB 75.

I wanted to clearly and strongly state my opposition to SB 75, the Tax Credit Voucher Program.

I have lived in Kansas for a quarter century, have attended school in Kansas and plan on sending my children shortly. I was in fostercare as a child. My family and I understand that public schools are a key part of the community and fully support them. An educated society is key and to the vitality of our communities and the longevity of our nation.

There are also numerous private schools in the area, and a number of the home-schooled; they are divorced from the rest of the community all too often, so socially separated in ways that cannot be beneficial to the community or the children now, or later in life.

This bill is a blatant attempt to undermine the principles of quality, free education for all Kansas children. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers.

Education Tax Credits can only divert already scarce funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education, increase teacher salaries and improve child safety. And it does this to subsidize the private choices of some parents.

It has the same negative impact as a voucher program, as well as setting a poor precedent of giving welfare to those well-off or well-connected enough to attend private school or home-school, while ignoring the needs of the average Kansas family.

Low-income students and those who have special educational needs such as foster and adopted children will be disproportionately impacted; their programs are already underfunded to the tune of \$175 MM. The Voucher Program can only make this worse.

There are no controls in place to ensure those receiving these tax credits are providing children with a quality education or any education at all. Kansans like myself expect effective funding and accountability for how our tax dollars are being used.

Thank you for your time and I hope this comment is accepted with all due consideration

Sincerely —

**Brisa Hooper
5600 Russell Avenue
Mission, KS 66202
United States
+1 816 814-4042**

I wanted to clearly and strongly state my opposition to SB 75, the Tax Credit Voucher Program.

I have lived in Kansas for over 50 years, have children in Kansas public schools now, and have had them in school in the past and soon expect my grand children to attend. We assist in school or school-supporting activities such as PTA. We have fostered numerous children, and assisted them in their education. We understand that public schools are a key part of the community and fully support them.

There are also numerous private schools in the area, and a number of the home-schooled; they are divorced from the rest of the community all too often, so socially separated in ways that cannot be beneficial to the community or the children now, or later in life.

An educated society is key to the and to the vitality of our communities and the longevity of our nation.

This bill is a craven attempt to undermine the principles of quality, free education for all Kansas children. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers.

Education Tax Credits can only divert already scarce funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education, increase teacher salaries and improve child safety. And it does this to subsidize the private choices of some parents.

It has the same negative impact as a voucher program, as well as setting a poor precedent of giving welfare to those well-off or well-connected enough to attend private school or home-school, while ignoring the needs of the average Kansas family.

Rural students and communities have fewer of these options, so will be disproportionately harmed when public school resources are drained to support urban and suburban private, religious, and home-schools instead. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka.

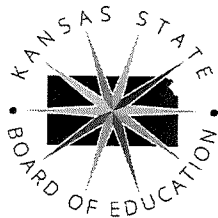
Low-income students and those who have special educational needs such as foster and adopted children will also be set aside; their programs are already underfunded to the tune of \$175 MM. The Voucher Program can only make this worse.

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 like myself expect effective funding, accountability for how our tax dollars are being used.

Thank you for your time and I hope this comment is accepted with all due consideration

Sincerely —

Steven Hooper
5600 Russell Avenue
Mission, KS 66202
United States
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Danny Zeck
District 1

Melanie Haas
District 2

Michelle Dombrosky
District 3

Connie O'Brien
District 4

Cathy Hopkins
District 5

Beryl New
District 6

Dennis Hershberger
District 7

Betty J. Arnold
District 8

Jim Porter
District 9

Debby Potter
District 10

1/28/2025

Opponent Testimony for Senate Bill 75

Senate Committee on Education
Cathy Hopkins and Danny Zeck, Liaisons
Kansas State Board of Education

Chair Erickson and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony regarding Senate Bill 75 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 2025 Legislative Priorities. Senate Bill 75 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 accredited and private nonaccredited schools.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our testimony,

Cathy Hopkins

Danny Zeck

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

VOTE NO on SB75

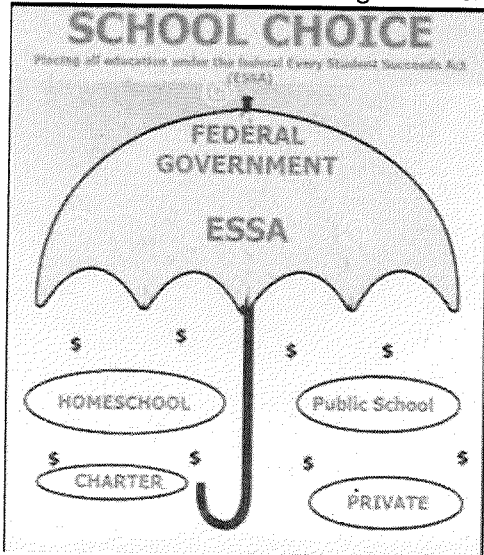
Senate Education committee members and all legislators.

VOTE NO on SB75.

This bill (which is very similar to 2023's SB128 and last year's SB509) would "establish" an education tax credit for taxpayers with kids not attending public school.

This is a "government school choice" offering.

Actual school choice already exists. It is not provided by the government, and therefore, is not controlled by the government. The "government school choice" bills repeatedly brought are deceptions, designed to bring any outlying non-government education into the fold of the government. Research of the history of "school choice" fully supports this fact.



Why do legislators continuously bring these "school choice" bills? They are purported to be **for** parents who have elected to educate their children outside of the public school realm. However, these parents – especially home school parents – repeatedly ask to not be included. At the very least, these parents are not the writers of these bills and have not historically been the ones asking for this "government school choice." Home school parents have even asked to not be included in SB75, and their request was denied!

So, why are legislators working so hard to "give" something to people who have not asked for it and DO NOT want it?

What is the history of "government school choice" legislation?

Could it be that the government is concerned that too many children are being educated outside of government designed systems?

Could it be that behind all the benevolent sounding talking points, this "government school choice" will eventually eradicate any non-government education?

Could it be that these "government school choice," "money following the child" offerings are just candy to ultimately trap ALL kids into government controlled education?

Some points about SB75:

- Parents claiming this "opportunity" offering are subject to the **IRS**, as well as other government departments.
Is that characteristic of individual liberty and freedom?
- Parents claiming this "opportunity" offering are subject to potential government **prosecution**?
Is this characteristic of individual liberty and freedom?
- Creates the "opportunity" for parents and non-public schools to become financially **dependent** on the government offered credit.
Is this characteristic of individual liberty and freedom?
- Will result in non-public school **tuition and cost increases** by at least the amounts parents can claim on their tax returns. Simple economics.
How will people who choose not to claim the tax credit (as proposed by legislators trying to get this bill passed) be negatively impacted?

How will the resulting higher tuition/costs “help” people afford a non-public school education?

How have costs for all changed (increased/decreased) in other areas (farmers, healthcare, roads, colleges/universities, etc.) that the government subsidizes (via direct funding, tax credits, deductions, etc.)?

How has this impacted individual liberty and freedom?

- Impacts government revenues and obligations. And, does so for taxpayers already choosing a non-public education for their children. **There is no fiscal note for SB75** yet. Have you seen the fiscal note for last year’s SB509?

https://kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/measures/documents/fisc_note_sb509_00_0000.pdf

By whom (and how) is this tax impact absorbed?

Plus, more government staff and IT costs, and unknown other impacts (see last paragraph.)

Is a bigger government budget likely or not to hinder individual liberty and freedom?

- Has opportunities for **fraud**.

Any amendments to deal with these problems **ONLY** grows government oversight, control, and subjugation of the taxpayer and school to the government.

Is this characteristic of individual liberty and freedom?

- Grows **government control**.

Already the bill defines which institutions and by how much certain taxpayers can participate.

How will these be incrementally changed?

There is already much precedent and history of the Kansas legislators repeatedly amending bills it passes; amendments that grow government control.

Is this characteristic of individual liberty and freedom?

- Contributes to the **nationalization of American education**.

The bill provides for private schools accredited by a “regional or national accrediting agency.”

How does this impact individual liberty and freedom?

- Establishes a creative form of a government **welfare/benefit/voucher**.

Is this characteristic of individual liberty and freedom?

- Has unknowns as to even greater potential costs to Kansas taxpayers.

- Grows **government reporting** requirements on the part of individuals and institutions.

- Already embodies “differing” credit amounts.

“Reward” for enrolling in accredited education; “penalize” for not doing so?

How will credit amounts be subsequently amended in the future? (There is already much precedent and history of the Kansas legislators repeatedly amending bills it passes.)

How will the tax code continue to be used to manipulate people?

This bill **ONLY** makes it harder for any non-government education to exist.

We end up getting the most independent minded and self-sufficient individuals and families hooked on a government mechanism.

Please, **VOTE NO on SB75**.

If you would like to understand more about Tuition Tax Credits (and school choice), you may want to read “Tuition Tax Credits – A Responsible Appraisal” by Barbara M. Morris.

Think these tax credits are some clever new idea? They are not!

This book was published in 1983!!!

And, don’t miss the Appendix regarding “needs assessments” or the chapter on collectivism.

[https://americandeception.com/ad/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Tuition Tax Credits-A Responsible Appraisal-Barbara Morris-1983-104pgs-EDU.sml .pdf](https://americandeception.com/ad/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Tuition_Tax_Credits-A_Responsible_Appraisal-Barbara_Morris-1983-104pgs-EDU.sml_.pdf)

Lisa Huesers

Leawood, KS 66224

“The nine most terrifying words in the English language are ‘I’m from the government and I’m here to help.” Ronald Reagan

From: Dr. Judy Hughey, NCC
1200 S. Mill Point Circle
Manhattan, KS. 66503

To: Senate Committee on Education

Written Testimony in OPPOSITION Regarding SB75:

As an educator for more than 45 years, I strongly urge you to vote NO on SB75. The bill gives tax credits to parents whose children are enrolled in NON-PUBLIC and UNACCREDITED schools including "micro-schools" and homeschools. Kansas knows that regardless of what name these schemes are given, a voucher is a voucher. As a matter of policy, I am vehemently opposed to giving public dollars to private and UNACCREDITED schools. I find it alarming that tax dollars would be given without any oversight or accountability.

I am pleased that the Science of Reading has become mandated by the legislature, the Kansas Department of Education, and Kansas Board of Regents. Requirements are placed in statute and in collaboration with KSDE and KBOR to mandate teachers and pre-service teachers to be prepared to implement the Science of Reading in classroom instruction. Yet, these requirements are not included for anyone receiving public funds to "teach" children in an unaccredited "micro" or home school environment. The same is true for implementing evidence-based practices and the mandate of achievement accountability. There is no accountability or oversight in SB75. These are critical mandates for students enrolled in public accredited schools, but not important for students and families who receive funds through SB75.

As a licensed counselor I am also deeply concerned regarding this proposed bill does not include any requirement for background checks or reporting of student abuse or neglect. It seems obvious that this bill presents a threat to student learning and safety.

Evidence and data-based practices are mandated for public schools. Yet, the evidence is overwhelming regarding how diverting public dollars from public schools hurts all public schools but especially rural schools and small towns. Fraud is also well documented in states who have implemented vouchers. Given the evidence of how vouchers hurt student achievement, it is disheartening that the concept is still being proposed in Kansas.

Thank you for voting NO on SB75. We appreciate your service to Kansas and our communities.

Dr. Judy Hughey

Dr. Judy Hughey
National Certified Counselor
Associate Professor Emeritus
Special Education, Counseling, and Student Affairs
College of Education
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506
785-532-8905 (cell)
jkhughey56@gmail.com

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Kathryn A. Hunt, kahunt5246@gmail.com
Private Citizen in Blue Valley School District 229

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your service in support of all Kansans. I write today to ask you all to vote “no” on the advancement of Bill SB 75. I am opposed to the contemplated use of public funds to support private schools.

My education and much of my success stems from an excellent public school system. I believe the provision of vouchers or tax credits to parents who choose to utilize private schools undermines the long-term success of our public school system. I feel private schools are often faith based and narrow in their academic focus whereas a public education encourages critical thinking and a diversity of experience that forges a well-informed citizenry aware of wider societal options and challenges.

Public tax dollars belong with public schools:

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers.
- Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program.
- 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.
- 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 that is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

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

- We should not be reducing state revenues by providing funding for families to funnel that money to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve.

- Families with children with special needs, disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language will not benefit from these tax credits as few private schools can accommodate their needs.
- 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.

Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy

- Families who can already afford the choice to send their kids to private school will benefit greatly, while funding for public schools and other state services pay the price.
- Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share.

Public schools are a public good:

- For many benefiting from these tax credits, especially those with multiple kids, they will receive annual refunds and will contribute nothing towards the public goods in our state that all Kansans benefit from.
- **Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools.**
- 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.

No oversight or accountability:

- Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools 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 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.

Impact on rural areas:

- Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.
- These tax credits will primarily benefit 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.

So, respectfully, I ask you all to vote “no” on Bill SB 75. Public funds should NOT be used to support families that CHOOSE to abandon public education.

Thank you,

Kathryn A. Hunt
Overland Park, KS 66213
kahunt5246@gmail.com

SB 75 OPPOSITION TESTIMONY

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

JANUARY 26TH, 2025

Elizabeth Hunter-Blank ehunterblank@gmail.com

I am a Private Tax Paying Citizen.

Chair Erickson and members of the committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. I have just recently learned that you will be discussing this bill this in the last couple of days. This issue is VERY important to me as a private citizen and a tax paying citizen. I believe that private school vouchers will undermine public schools. It will take money away from our public schools and allow parents to use that money for private and/or religious schools (thus interfering with the separation of church and state). I also believe it will harm students in rural areas who may not have many alternative options because it will deplete funds from public schools.

I am a strong believer in the need to provide accredited education to all of our children so they may have a good education and develop critical thinking skills to become productive citizens.

Also, at least in Johnson County, many people choose to move to this county because of the good reputation of our schools. If nothing else, I believe it would make living here less appealing and could impact our real estate values. I do not have children myself however, I have always thought it was important to support our public schools and I only want my tax dollars to go to our public schools.

Thank you again for reading my testimony. Please vote NO on SB 75.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Hunter-Blank
ehunterblank@gmail.com
66208

I am writing to express a NO WAY vote to school vouchers.

As one who believes wholeheartedly in a parents right to choose, I believe in a taxpayers right to refuse.

Tax dollars should support PUBLIC EDUCATION alone. From many years ago, my question has been " from where do these dollars come?"

Do our smaller districts across the State understand the consequences of this thought process?

Does the legislature truly understand the undermining of public education?

I will encourage others to speak out and ask if every one of our representatives visit several schools in their respective districts. Then, let's ask some tough questions of ourselves. #1. In whose best interest are these discussions even percolating?

As a public education advocate, vouchers will NEVER have my support. Years ago, I might have been described as an " angry soccer mom". No longer. I am now proudly an " angry soccer grammie". Vouchers do nothing but create continued inequities in our communities, and across our great State.

Nancy Ingram

913.461.5381

3312 W 97th Pl, Leawood, KS 66206

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025

Corliss Jacobs - corlissjacobs@gmail.com
Citizen and Taxpayer in Unified School District 233

TO: Chair Erickson and Members of the Senate Education Committee
S.Education@senate.ks.gov

SUBJECT: SB75 - Written Testimony in Opposition

- Public schools belong to us all. We don't pay taxes to educate *only* our own children; we pay taxes to educate *all* children. An educated citizenry is what makes our country great.
- Public money used to pay for religious school tuition means that I am being forced to support religious institutions, even though they may not express my beliefs. This is a major reason our Constitution separates church and state
- SB75 has the potential to bankrupt our state in a few years. We can look at Arizona to see the desperate situation vouchers can cause.
- Public funds belong to all of us, and we pay our taxes with the expectation that they will be used for the common good; for example, even though I personally will never drive on all the highways in Kansas, they are essential for the functioning and prosperity of our state.
- "School choice" is a false tag-line. It's a moniker meant to blur the underlying intent to eventually make schools private profit centers, as has been accomplished with prisons.
- Please consider this analogy: The State of Kansas has great public parks, but if I want to join a country club instead of using publicly-funded parks, *I cannot expect the State of Kansas to pay my membership fees*. Is using public tax money for private schools any different?
- "School Choice" is not available to all Kansans. For example, most rural Kansans don't have private schools," so their schools would be de-funded to support private schools in urban areas. I grew up in a small Western Kansas community where students were regularly featured in the newspaper and even residents without kids attended school functions and congratulated us on academic achievements. Now, in many communities, the school is the only thing that holds them together.

Thank you for your time and service to our state.

Sincerely,

Corliss Jacobs

Olathe, Senate District 9

Opponent, Written Testimony on SB 75

For the Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Gail Jamison

Kansas Resident

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to SB 75. As a former non-partisan elected board of education representative for the USD 265 school district, I have been actively involved in the education of students for the Goddard District. I continue to volunteer in my community to support our district in the mission to educate all students for lifelong success.

I oppose SB 75 as it proposes to give tax credits to people who choose to educate their children in a private school. While people have the choice to pursue private education, they should not be entitled to a “state rebate” simply for making that choice.

Public education is a right supported by the Kansas Constitution and funding is provided by all citizens as a civic responsibility for living in this state. Citizens are not entitled to tax credits because they no longer use services.

Another issue of concern with this bill includes: no fiscal note posted with this bill to provide details on the cost to the state, all which would be important to determine the impact, detrimental to public schools.

I see very minimal details about accountability processes and procedures with the proposal. Without strict accountability and enforcement oversight, this will allow for abuse to occur, which harms all of us as taxpayers in the state.

Please be mindful of the responsibility to the majority of children who are educated in public schools, supported by all taxpayers of this state. Catering to select families who choose and can pay for private education at the expense of the public-school children is not responsible legislation.

I urge the committee members to oppose SB 75.

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Kimberly Jones, kimebertjones@gmail.com

Parent in Blue Valley School District

Chair Erickson @ members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. I am lucky to have a child in the Blue Valley school district. I grew up in a small town and am a daughter of a school board president. My dad was the president for many years in my school district growing up. I have seen the impact of small and large school districts on my and my son's education. In a state, with so many rural school districts, it is disappointing this continues to be put forward in our government.

Vouchers/Tax Credits:

- undermine our public school system by diverting our tax dollars away from public schools.
- can exacerbate inequality by disproportionately benefiting wealthier families who can afford to supplement the voucher with their own funds, while lower-income families might not be able to cover the remaining cost of private schooling. This means the most disadvantaged children may not gain as much benefit from the program.
- divert critical funding away from public schools, which are already often underfunded. This can result in a weakening of public education, affecting resources, teacher salaries, and student support services.
- can exacerbate inequality by disproportionately benefiting wealthier families who can afford to supplement the voucher with their own funds, while lower-income families might not be able to cover the remaining cost of private schooling. This means the most disadvantaged children may not gain as much benefit from the program.
- do not have any accountability. Private schools that accept vouchers are not always held to the same standards as public schools in terms of curriculum, teacher qualifications, and accountability measures. This could lead to a lack of oversight, and parents may not have the same level of transparency or recourse when issues arise.
- Can impact teacher quality: If public schools lose students due to the voucher system, they may be forced to lay off teachers or reduce staff, which can impact teacher quality and student support services. In contrast, private schools may not have the same level of teacher training or oversight.

Please vote no on SB 75. It does not benefit our kids. People move to the Blue Valley School District from all over the country, why divert funds from it?

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Taurii Kastning
Parent in Shawnee Mission School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill SB 75.

As an avid home and un-schooler during covid and in support of my children's neurodivergence, and as a parent to two children with IEPs, I implore you to vote no on SB 75.

School vouchers divert essential public funds away from our already underfunded public schools to subsidize private and religious education. This approach undermines the foundational principle of equitable access to quality education for all Kansas children. Public schools are designed to serve every student, regardless of their background or ability, and they rely on consistent funding to maintain vital programs, hire qualified teachers, and provide necessary resources. Redirecting public dollars to private institutions that are not held to the same standards of accountability or inclusivity risks deepening disparities and weakening the public education system that so many families depend on.

Furthermore, school vouchers lack transparency and oversight, raising concerns about their efficacy and fairness. Private schools receiving voucher funds are not required to follow the same nondiscrimination policies, meaning taxpayer money could support institutions that exclude students based on income, disability, or other factors. Kansas needs to invest in strengthening public schools by ensuring equitable funding, improving teacher support, and enhancing classroom resources—not by subsidizing private education. I urge you to prioritize the needs of all Kansas students and communities by rejecting school voucher proposals that threaten the integrity and accessibility of public education.

My boys need all of the academic resources that their wonderful school provides AND a strong and diverse community that truly helps them understand the world around them. Vote no on SB 75. Let school vouchers continue to fail in other states. *Ad Astra per Aspera.*

Dear Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB75, which redirects public education funding to private and non-credentialed organizations. This bill weakens our public schools, undermines professional educators, and subsidizes private choices at the expense of the public good.

Voucher programs in other states have shown the harmful consequences of diverting public funds:

Weakened Public Schools: As public dollars are siphoned away, public schools face budget cuts, leading to larger class sizes, fewer resources, and reduced programming—disproportionately affecting students in rural and low-income areas.

Limited Accountability: Non-credentialed organizations and private schools often lack the same transparency and accountability standards required of public schools, leaving families with fewer protections and guarantees of quality education.

Worsened Inequity: These programs primarily benefit wealthier families, as vouchers often fail to cover the full cost of private tuition, leaving lower-income families without access while public schools lose funding.

Public funds should stay in public schools, where they serve all students equitably, not just a select few. Non-credentialed organizations further devalue the role of highly trained teachers, undermining the quality and professionalism essential to education.

I urge you to vote against SB75 and protect Kansas public schools and the students and communities they serve.

Sincerely,

Ryan Kerwin

Basehor, KS Resident

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Rebecca Keunen rebecca.keunen@gmail.com
Parent in Shawnee Mission School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to bill SB 75. Thank you for serving your constituents and the people of Kansas who trust you to listen and vote in the best interests of our children.

I deeply value public schools as I've seen firsthand the remarkable difference they've made to help my children succeed. My son, who is now a 7th grader at Indian Woods Middle School, was born premature. At an early age he benefited from early intervention services, then in elementary school from the support offered through an IEP. Now in middle school, he only needs limited support through a 504 plan. This is a testament to the positive impact early intervention services and public school educators made in his life. My daughter, who is in 5th grade, has always thrived at school and we are sincerely grateful for the difference her public school teachers make on a daily basis. We often support the schools through fundraising efforts, as there have consistently been shortfalls in public education funding provided to our district. We live in Overland Park and pay a lot in taxes, yet our schools still fail to receive the funding needed to help all children within the district succeed.

As a professional social worker I see firsthand the societal impact when systems fail to support the most vulnerable. A strong public education system benefits our entire state, 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.

In addition to supporting funding for our public schools, I sincerely hope you will do what's right for the countless children who depend on public schools and vote no on bill SB 75.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Keunen

SB 75 Opposition Testimony Senate Education Committee January 27, 2025

Kareen King kking@thegoldenexperience.com

Private Citizen

Chair Erickson and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to bill SB 75. I appreciate your time in reviewing my comments.

I am a product of public education in the Topeka (501) district, graduation from Topeka West in 1978. I then went on to get my BGS degree at Emporia State University. Eventually I worked as a substitute teacher and school accompanist for the Osage City School District 401 where all five of my schools attended and graduated from.

SB 75 would put a significant drain on public schools, as tax dollars would be diverted from the public spectrum to the private school. This is terribly wrong and unjust. Public Tax Dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children. I know that should SB 75 pass, funds that would be needed to properly educate our students would subsidize private choices of some parents. Public education is available to all students, private education is not. Students in rural areas of our state have little to no private options.

In the meantime I have a special needs grandson who is only two years away from attending public school. All students deserve the right to an exceptional education experience. We should not be reducing revenues by providing funding for families to funnel that money to private schools that can and do pick and choose which children they want to serve. I have seen this happen. Special education is already underfunded by millions of dollars. Those that can afford private schools, have the right to send their children to such schools, but vouchers are simply "Welfare" for the "Wealthy".

Thank you for your consideration,

Kareen King

As someone who understands the value of our public schools to an educated society and to the vitality of our communities, I **OPPOSE** this SB 75 Voucher Bill and/or voucher programs in general.

Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers. Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program. 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.**

Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not.

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.

Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools 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 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.

FINALLY, OUR CONSTITUTION STATES THAT THERE SHOULD BE A SEPARATION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE.

Shelly Kirkpatrick

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Celeste Kirmer, ckirmer@aol.com

Parent in 512 school district, private citizen.

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. Thank you for the time and service.

I oppose this bill for the following reasons.

1. I value the public schools in Kansas and do not want to see them dismantled. I grew up going to public schools in Kansas and now my kids are going to public schools in Kansas.
2. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate ALL children and that are accountable to taxpayers.
3. Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program.
4. 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.
5. The legislature should be using these tax dollars to fully fund special education that is currently underfunded by \$173 million instead of considering this bill.
6. We should not be reducing state revenues by providing funding for families to funnel that money to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve.
7. Private schools are not held to the same standards as our public schools.
8. 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.
9. Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share.
10. Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools.

11. Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools 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.

12. 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.

13. Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public-school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.

Based on all the above points I am asking that you vote NO on bill SB 75. This bill does not benefit that majority of families in our state. This bill will do just the opposite. It will lead to the decline of our state.

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Scott Kirmer, skirmer@aol.com

Parent in 512 school district, private citizen.

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. Thank you for the time and service.

I oppose this bill for the following reasons.

1. I value the public schools in Kansas and do not want to see them dismantled. I grew up going to public schools in Kansas and now my kids are going to public schools in Kansas.
2. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate ALL children and that are accountable to taxpayers.
3. Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program.
4. 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.
5. The legislature should be using these tax dollars to fully fund special education that is currently underfunded by \$173 million instead of considering this bill.
6. We should not be reducing state revenues by providing funding for families to funnel that money to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve.
7. Private schools are not held to the same standards as our public schools.
8. 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.
9. Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share.
10. Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools.

11. Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools 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.

12. 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.

13. Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public-school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.

Based on all the above points I am asking that you vote NO on bill SB 75. This bill does not benefit that majority of families in our state. This bill will do just the opposite. It will lead to the decline of our state.

**SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025**

**Christy Kleinsorge, PhD; cakleinsorge@gmail.com
Parent of students in the Shawnee Mission School District, graduate
of the Shawnee Mission School District**

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. I am a proud graduate of the Shawnee Mission school district, and I have triplets who attend Shawnee Mission West High School. I personally have benefitted from a strong education in the public school system, and I went on to earn my PhD in clinical child psychology at the University of Kansas. My K-12 education gave me the foundation to make my college education possible, and I want the same foundation to be available for my children and for all Kansans.

I believe that public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate **all** children and that are accountable to taxpayers.

Further, I believe that the state of Kansas has an obligation to fully fund special education. We absolutely should not be reducing state revenues by providing funding for families to funnel that money to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve. Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools 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.

Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools.

In closing, **I implore you to vote no on bill SB 75.** The children of Kansas deserve a strong, fully funded public education.

Sincerely,
Christy Kleinsorge, PhD

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Jennifer Klenke

Parent of a student at Brookwood Elementary

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill SB 75.

My wife and I grew up Catholic and had planned to stay with the Catholic school system for our children. Unfortunately, the year before our son, James was to enter Kindergarten, it was decided in the Johnson County diocese that the children of married gay parents would not be permitted to enroll in Catholic grade schools. This happened after another family was turned away from St. Ann in Prairie Village-- which happens to be my childhood parish. The reasoning I was given was that there is no way to rectify a gay marriage in the church. Divorced people can get annulments, unmarried parents can get married, but a gay marriage is not condoned and a divorce from a gay marriage would not be acceptable either. Archbishop Naumann argued that they did not want to be teaching one thing at school and have the children learn something different at home. This is discrimination, plain and simple. Very well. I can come to terms with the church not accepting my choices in life. However, any school that could turn a child away from an education based on the family that they happen to have been born into deserves NO tax dollars. This voucher program rewards schools that exclude children for whatever reason they choose. Our tax dollars need to stay with the public schools that serve ALL students. The parents of private school students always have the option to enroll their children in public school, but the reverse is not true.

I implore you to vote NO on bill SB 75. It is your duty to serve your constituents, and this bill does not serve all constituents. This bill is harmful to our public education and it is my expectation that you vote to protect our public schools.

Thank you for your time,

Jennifer Klenke,

Leawood, KS

I am writing in opposition to SB 75.

Pubic tax dollars belong with public schools:

- ***Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers.***
- ***Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program.***
- ***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 that is currently underfunded by \$173 million.***

Please vote NO for SB 75

Laura Klusener

Pittsburg KS 66762

Sent from my iPhone

January 26, 2025

Testimony to the Senate Education Committee
Megan Kohlman, Parent, Hesston Middle School Teacher
meganbkohlman@gmail.com
Opponent Written Testimony for SB 75

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 75. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75.

Public taxpayer dollars should be used for public education. Kansas K-12 public schools provide an important opportunity to every single Kansas student, regardless of their abilities, needs, guardians' abilities to advocate for them, or zip code. Additionally, public schools have numerous accountability measures in place to ensure that they are meeting the needs of all students including the accreditation process and state assessments.

Private schools are not held to the same standard of education or accountability. They are selective about which students they accept and are not held to the same expectation of high quality education that public schools are. Because of this, private schools should not have access, even in the form of tax credits, to funds that could improve public education.

Please oppose SB 75. Every child in the state of Kansas has equitable access to public schools. The same simply cannot be said for private schools, and that alone should disqualify private schools from having public funding of any kind, even in the form of tax credits.

Thank you for your consideration and your understanding of the importance of public education in Kansas.

Megan Kohlman
Hesston, KS

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Jeanne Koontz, koontz.jeanne@gmail.com
Parent in USD 308 School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for your service on this committee working to ensure all Kansas kids have access to a great education. I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 75.

I am currently a parent of two children who attend school in the Hutchinson School District and receive Special Education services for Gifted. Public schools are vital to our communities:

- They help us have an educated society which ensures a qualified workforce.
- They provide education for all.
- They provide a space for kids to encounter and experience people from different cultures, different socio-economic backgrounds, different races, and different abilities. I believe this leads to a more welcoming and compassionate society.

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. In the rural parts of our state, including Hutchinson, there are no private school choices outside of religious schools. 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 that is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

I implore you to vote NO on SB 75 and protect public education.

Sincerely,
Rev. Jeanne Koontz

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Desiree Koudele, dkoudele@gmail.com
Parent in the Blue Valley School District

Chair Erickson and members of the committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony. I am the parent of a 6th grade student at Pleasant Ridge Middle School in the Blue Valley School District, and also the parent of a very recent Blue Valley West High School graduate, who is currently a student in the Hicks Honor College at the University of North Florida – an accomplishment that I greatly credit his former teachers for, as well as the excellent services and educational opportunities his Kansas public schools provided for him.

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools, which accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers. 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. Those parents are free to choose the schooling that they feel best suits their family. However, for many Kansas families, public schools are the only choice available to them. To take public tax dollars and then hand it over to parties that have no accountability for that money, is a disservice to your constituents and the millions of Kansas children who rely on public schools.

The part most concerning to me is how this bill will negatively affect Special Education. My 6th grade daughter is Dyslexic. She currently has an IEP, services and accommodations that have helped her be a successful student. 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. Special Education programs and the specialized teachers that help these students are one of the most important cornerstones of public schools. SB 75 will negatively my daughter – and the countless other Kansas children like her – who receive Special Education services to become successful students in our schools.

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. Undermining our public schools will only harm Kansas children.

I ask you to please vote NO on bill SB 75.

Thank you for your time,
Desiree Koudele

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Abigail Kroll

Parent in Shawnee Mission School District

Chair Erickson and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill SB 75. As a parent with three children in the public school system, I recognize the importance of equal opportunity for all children to learn in an unbiased setting. The only place this can happen is in a public school. If we want the best for the future of our district, our city, our state, our country, ALL children should have a chance at education. This bill will directly benefit the wealthy, those who already have the choice, the power, the financial freedom to send their children to whatever school they choose. It will negatively impact those in the public school system by diverting funds that could be used to maintain and improve said schools. Instead of providing tax credits to Kansas choosing not to send their kids to public schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education that is currently UNDERFUNDED by \$173 million.

I thank you for considering my plea, and the plea of millions of other families who have the best interest of our children and our society at heart.

Regards,

Abigail Kroll