

This testimony is given in Opposition of SB75.

SB 75 Opposition Testimony Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Debra Rettenmaier

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am a mother of 2 in Leawood, Kansas. Both of my children attend/ed public schools in the SMSD school district from K through 12. My daughter is currently a freshman at Shawnee Mission East and will graduate in 2028 and my son is a Graduate of SMEast in last year's class of 2024. I know firsthand the importance of public education and the absolute necessity of preserving the funding for our public schools.

My son currently attends Loyola University of Chicago on both academic and athletic scholarship and earned straight A's his first semester at university. He would not be where he is today without the strong background of positive public education that provided a terrific education and a diverse atmosphere for both learning and socializing.

My daughter currently attends SMEast and benefits daily from the efforts of our public education system.

I strongly oppose creating a school voucher system to siphon funding from already stressed public schools. A society is only as strong as its citizens and uneducated citizenry is a weakness that cannot be overcome. We need to defend and fund our public schools rather than continue to weaken them. Public schools accept ALL and attempt to educate and raise ALL who attend.

Allowing vouchers to be given to those families that choose private schools or homeschooling weakens our public institutions and forces taxpayers to fund religious ideologies and both secular

and nonsecular curriculums that are not vetted nor supported in the public realm. Vouchers hurt rural families, the disenfranchised, the poor, etc... and do so with little to no oversight of material thereby hurting many of the children receiving the vouchers. School choice is available to families that opt for it BUT using taxpayer dollars is NOT the way to go. We all pay in to the public system regardless of whether we choose to use all of the public amenities these dollars fund.

I resent that we must revisit this issue time and time again. If you are frustrated with the public education system may I suggest you work to strengthen it so that all may benefit rather than continue your attempts to weaken an already fragile system. School vouchers are not the answer. Please vote no on SB75.

Thank you for your time and your service.

Cordially,

Debra Rettenmaier

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Nicole Richter

Parent in Olathe school district

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

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

My kids attend public school and I attended public school. At different times we have considered private or homeschool but have always come back to the fact that schools in our state and county are better than many other places. Our biggest barrier to private school is the cost so at first glance a voucher sounds appealing. However, I do not agree that this voucher should be available to everyone no matter their income. I do not agree that there is no oversight to how much private tuition is or how this money is being spent for homeschooling. Funding for public schools is already a challenge, especially special education and I don't think we should be approving anything that takes funding away from that. There may be a place for vouchers in the future but this bill is not it.

Please vote NO on bill SB 75.

Quick Summary of Bill SB 75

In a nutshell, SB 75 provides a school voucher in the form of a refundable tax credit to any Kansan who doesn't send their kids to a public school — \$8000 per kid for those attending an accredited private school, \$4000 per kid for an unaccredited (homeschool, etc.) school.

A family with three kids attending private school would receive a tax credit of \$24,000 annually, regardless of their income. If the tax credit is more than their taxes owed, they receive a refund.

This tax credit voucher would reduce state revenues needed to fund public goods such as our public schools (that educate 90% of Kansas kids), roads, infrastructure, state parks, and more. And many of these taxpayers would end up contributing nothing towards these and other public goods Kansans rely upon. They would avoid paying state taxes simply by homeschooling or sending their kids to private school.

See the latest [Six Degrees of Activism newsletter](#) for more details on the bill.

Below you will find:

- Template for writing testimony in opposition to SB 75
- Instructions for Submitting Testimony
- Talking points helpful for crafting testimony

Testimony can be short and sweet or feel free to elaborate with a few of the talking points below. Don't stress too much. Just express your general opposition so there is a lot of opposition testimony for vouchers in Kansas on the public record. Legislators will take note of that if the bill goes to the floor for a vote.

Save your testimony as you can likely use it again as we expect more voucher bills this session. And let us know if you submitted testimony, so we can track our efforts and easily contact you as this bill or other voucher bills move through the legislative session.

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Bernadette Roche, berniemgr@hotmail.com

Parent of three in USD 232; Teacher in USD 512

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

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

I have a unique perspective on this bill. My three children attended private school for eight years. They attended public school until graduation. Two have graduated USD 232 and attend public universities. One is a sophomore in USD 232. In addition to being a parent of students in both private and public schools, I am a proud educator who has taught in both private and public schools for over 25 years. While our entire family benefited from private school, it was truly our public school experiences that have created the current voters and citizens that we are.

I strongly oppose this bill and voucher programs in general (tax credit, voucher, school choice, etc). Public schools are unique in that they are tasked with teaching ALL children, without picking and choosing who they educate. It has been a privilege to teach a variety of students and my own children benefited from learning alongside these differences. I have directly experienced a private school twice refusing to service one of my students due to his disability. It is fiscally irresponsible to reduce state revenues to funnel money to private schools. Instead, the state legislature should use these tax dollars to fully fund special education which is currently underfunded by \$173 million.

My opposition is strongly rooted in the lack of accountability and oversight of vouchers, tax credits, school choice, etc.. I have seen first-hand and my children experienced the lack of accountability, lack of curriculum, lack of assessment that is the norm in private schools.. In eight years, there was no way for me as a parent to identify growth in my children nor transparency on how my tuition dollars were spent. This bill in particular has no oversight for taxpayers to understand how our dollars are being spent and whether children's lives are improved. There are no controls in place to ensure that children are receiving a quality education. Kansas taxpayers deserve more.

In closing, please vote no on bill SB 75.

Thank you,
Bernadette Roche



PO Box 654
Lawrence, KS 66044
<https://kansasinterfaithaction.org>
(913) 232-2336

Rabbi Moti Rieber, Executive Director
Rev. Dr. Annie Ricker, Board Chair

**Testimony In Opposition to SB 75, Education Opportunity Tax Credit
by Lynn Rogers, KIFA Board member**

Senate Committee on Education, Sen. Renee Erickson, Chair

January 29, 2025

Mme. Chair, Members of the Committee:

My name is Lynn Rogers, and I am appearing on behalf of Kansas Interfaith Action, a statewide, multi-faith issue-advocacy organization on whose board I serve. We partner with many of the major mainline denominations in Kansas and also represent hundreds of communities of faith and individuals of faith and conscience throughout Kansas. KIFA opposes SB 75.

The faith community that KIFA represents considers public education a cornerstone of our democratic system, helping to develop an educated and enlightened citizenry. The idea that every child, whatever their background or economic status, can receive a world-class education, is one of the things that we can be proudest of as Kansans and as Americans. Public education is a project we all share, one of the few remaining areas of civic life that our entire society supports, whether we directly benefit from it or not.

Our public schools are the pride of Kansas; from the huge and world-class schools in Johnson County to the small school districts in our rural towns, every child in Kansas has the right to a good education – and they get it. We should do nothing to undermine, or to underfund our system. We’ve been down that road before.

Public funding of private and religious education – whether via vouchers, or educational savings accounts, or as here, “refundable tax credits” – undermines this commitment. It does not improve academic achievement. These schools are not subject to the same accountability standards as public schools, and get to choose their students, unlike our public schools, which serve all students.

The people of faith that make up Kansas Interfaith Action public schools oppose efforts to use public funding to support private or religious education. The position of by the United Methodist Church, both in its Statement Concerning Church-Government Relations and Education (1968) and the Statement on Church-Government Relations (2016 Book of Resolutions, #5012)¹ is so strong that it deserves extensive citation here:

The fundamental purpose of universal public education at the elementary and secondary levels is to provide equal and adequate educational opportunities for all children and young people, and thereby ensure the nation an enlightened citizenry.

We believe in the principle of universal public education, and we reaffirm our support of public educational institutions. At the same time, we recognize and pledge our continued allegiance to the US

¹ Church & Society, The United Methodist Church. Social Principles and Resolutions/Church-Government Relations, #5012 (2016) <https://www.umcjustice.org/who-we-are/social-principles-and-resolutions/church-government-relations-5012>

constitutional principle that citizens have a right to establish and maintain private schools from private resources so long as such schools meet public standards of quality. Such schools have made a genuine contribution to society. ***We do not support the expansion or the strengthening of private schools with public funds.*** Furthermore, we oppose the establishment or strengthening of private schools that jeopardize the public school system or thwart valid public policy.

We specifically oppose tuition tax credits, school vouchers, or any other mechanism that directly or indirectly allows government funds to support religious schools at the primary and secondary level. Persons of one particular faith should be free to use their own funds to strengthen the belief system of their particular religious group. They should not, however, expect all taxpayers, including those who adhere to other religious belief systems, to provide funds to teach religious views with which they do not agree.

The program designed by this bill undermines the “no-aid” clause in the Kansas constitution (Kan. Const. Art. 1, § 7; Art. VI, § 6c), which prohibits the use of public money for sectarian religious education.

The value of the public education system is that all of us support it, and that it brings young people together from the broadest swath of life to learn both critical thinking skills and how to live and work together. Parents who want to send their children to private or religious schools are certainly entitled to do so – but not at the expense of public education, which is undermined by the dedication of public funding to private, sectarian schools.

SB 75 is yet another effort to get public money into private hands. It undermines our commitment to our public schools, and it undermines the Kansas and US Constitutions. Kansas has in recent years managed to fund our public schools fully and adequately, as our Constitution demands. This measure would undermine that commitment, and I urge you to oppose it.

Thank you for your attention.

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Linda Salem

(Parent of two former public-school students in USD305 and hopeful to someday be a grandparent to Kansas public school students!)

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to share my opposition to bill SB 75.

As a former student in public schools (USD 428) I have a deep appreciation for the value and necessity of public education. In our smaller communities, we stay viable and successful when we all work together to provide quality education to all our young people.

Vouchers are welfare for wealthy families: Education tax credits are just as harmful as vouchers, they divert money from funding public education to fund the private choice of some parents, many who can afford to fund this choice themselves. Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share. This dilutes the funds that should be available to fully fund special education, provide competitive wages to our teachers in public schools and give them the supplies they need so they do not need to pay for classroom supplies themselves.

These tax credits will primarily benefit those in urban areas of Kansas. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas like Johnson County, Wichita and Topeka. I grew up in Great Bend and have been a resident of Salina for decades. Smaller communities in Kansas cannot afford to subsidize these wealthy areas. It will cause great harm to the local school districts that mean so much to me.

Public Schools must take all students: Our tax dollars should not be used to fund private schools who can decide not to accept any student they choose. Public schools do accept all.

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.

Accountability matters: 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 used. I do not want my tax dollars being

used to fund private and homeschools that have no oversight, leaving us uniformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children.

I ask you to vote no on bill SB75, if there is more money available for education in Kansas, instead I ask you to consider fully funding special education rather than diverting dollars to non-public schools.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Salem".

Linda Salem

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 27, 2026
Heather Schroer
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.

I am writing to encourage you to vote no on bill SB 75. While it may seem on the surface to benefit the average Kansas family to provide a tax credit to use homeschooling or private schooling to educate one's children, this bill will divert much needed funds from public education in Kansas, which serves to educate the vast majority of children in our state. Providing the same amount regardless of the tuition a family pays or the type of non-public school their child attends, seems an irresponsible fiscal decision. Additionally, many of these settings which would enable families to receive tax credits do not require oversight or regulation to ensure that participating children receive the high quality education our state wants for its future leaders.

If this bill were to pass, it would be another blow to public education in Kansas, particularly special education, which has not been fully funded by the state in my adulthood. As a parent and educator myself, I see firsthand how the lack of funding has required public school districts to take money from general funds which would benefit all students, to supplement the missing funds in order to provide the legally required services and supports for students with disabilities. It is irresponsible to deepen this gap while providing a blanket tax credit to families who have privately chosen to send their children to another non-public education setting.

Private schools may choose who to accept, and in doing so, many deny admission to students with disabilities, those who live in poverty, or who speak English as a second language. Instead of providing tax credits, we should seek to make our public school system in Kansas the best in the nation, so that parents will feel confident that their children are receiving the rigorous, high quality education they envision.

In summary, I ask you to vote no on bill SB 75. It is fiscally irresponsible, intentionally vague, and will only further harm our public education system in Kansas, including special education. Thank you for this opportunity.

Heather Schroer

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

DeAnna Schulz, deannaschulz22@gmail.com

Private Citizen, Tax Payer, Lenexa, KS

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for your dedication and service to the State of Kansas and Kansans. I am writing today to voice my opposition to bill SB 75.

As the daughter of two life long Kansas Public School Teachers I am concerned about what passing this bill will mean to the health of our public schools. Taking money away from our public schools to either give to private schools or for Kansas citizens to pocket will absolutely hurt our public schools and our children's futures. The bill is written without income limits meaning those who don't need the assistance to send their children to private schools can take money needed by those Kansas families who don't have these same resources. There is also no need to show how much a student is paying in tuition to receive the vouchers, meaning some families could be pocketing the difference if their tuition is lower than the credit. Additionally, there is no requirement to attend a private school in Kansas. Living close to the state line I can see how easy it would be for Kansas families to send their children to a Missouri private school – something they are welcome to do with their own money but if they were using my tax dollars to do so, I certainly have a problem with that.

I do not personally have children but am happy that my taxes help fund our public schools as I know how important that is the future of Kansas and our children's education. I've seen what vouchers systems have done to public schools in other states like Arizona. It would be devastating to see the same thing happen in Kansas. We are blessed to have incredible public schools, especially in Johnson County where I live. Passing bill SB 75 would be detrimental to our schools, our students, and our teachers/administrators.

Thanks you for taking the time to read my opposition to bill SB75. I hope you'll do what is best for Kansas children by voting against this bill.

DeAnna Schulz, Lenexa KS

**SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee**

January 28, 2025

Hannah Schumacher hrschumacher@gmail.com

Parent of students in Topeka Public Schools District 501 and former Educator

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to bill SB 75.

As a parent of students in eleventh, seventh and fifth grades in Topeka Public Schools I understand the importance of public schools and their vital roles in our communities and the need for them to be fully funded. Public tax dollars should stay with public schools that accept and educate all students and are accountable to taxpayers. This bill aims to take public money and divert it to private and oftentimes religious schools who can choose who they admit. This essentially negates the option for choice for families. Public tax dollars shouldn't go to private institutions or homeschools where oversight is lacking and taxpayers can't see the effectiveness of the education those institutions are providing to Kansas students. Instead of using tax dollars to provide tax credits to Kansans choosing not to utilize public schools, we should be using those dollars to fully fund our currently underfunded special education programs.

I urge you to vote no on SB 75 and keep public tax dollars in public schools where all Kansas students are accepted and educated.

Thank you,
Hannah Schumacher

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Sandra Sherry, bsherry1030@gmail.com
Parent in Shawnee Mission School District

Dear Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. Here are some of the reasons why I oppose this bill:

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

As the parent of two children who have benefited from public schools in Kansas, I feel strongly that public tax dollars should only be used for public education that is available to all children.

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Sarah Shouse,

Parent in Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD)

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

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

I am writing in firm opposition of school vouchers. While I attended private schools and appreciate the learning opportunity, I also understand the importance of public schools and our duty to support them. I see public education as a common good, and if we do not put the required funds in this system, we all pay. Currently, I have 2 children in SMSD. One child has Down syndrome and requires an IEP. We, as a society, have to do a better job funding our schools. Vouchers will take away from the children in general, but especially further undermine the resources required by IDEA Act.

Please, consider the children and the greater good. Vote "NO" on bill SB 75.

Dr. Sarah Shouse

Parent/Advocate

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Kristen Sittig, Kristen.sittig@gmail.com
Teacher and concerned citizen

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for your time and your efforts to ensure that all Kansas students have access to education. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. I have spent the past 12 years teaching Kansas students, and have seen firsthand how a strong public school system benefits students and their families.

Public education is the bedrock of our society. This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen public schools, which are obligated to educate **all** students, and diverts it to families who made a private choice for a non-public education. If families want to pursue education outside of the public school system, that is their prerogative, but they should **not** be allowed to take resources from other students in order to do so. School vouchers take resources from the most at-risk; students in poor communities, rural communities, or those with special needs, and funnel them to families who already have access to private schools. In the case of this bill, it sends those funds regardless of whether a family can already afford private school, and without any guarantee that a child is receiving an acceptable education.

We should not be reducing money available to public schools to funnel money to private schools. Public schools educate all Kansas children, regardless of disability, home language, special needs, or any other home circumstance. This is why we as the public provide money for schools, because an educated society is in the best interest of us all. Private schools have no such obligation – they can pick and choose who they admit, and can dismiss students if they become too much of a challenge to educate. Private schools also have no oversight of how they are spending this publicly funded money. Kansans deserve to know how our tax dollars are spent, and sending money to private schools leaves us in the dark as to how those funds are used.

School vouchers are bad for schools, bad for students, bad for the average family, and bad for Kansas taxpayers. Public schools are a public good, and I urge you to reject this bill and focus on strengthening our public schools, so that **all** Kansas children have access to a world class education.

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Briana Smith

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.

I have three children that will go Pre-K through 12th grade in the Shawnee Mission School District. Their public education will be similar to that of myself, Shawnee Mission School District, and my husband, Olathe School District. We both value our education and appreciate it. The education we received helped us both attend the University of Kansas and graduate with Bachelor of Science degrees. We are both productive members of society in good standing. We attribute this to our great public education.

My daughter is dyslexic and receives special education with an IEP. Without this, she would be struggling to read and keep up with her peers. She would not thrive in a private education environment where they do not have the availability of special education professionals to help her.

I am asking you to vote no on bill SB 75. Do it for kids like mine who need public education and the special services.

January 27, 2025

Testimony to the Senate Education Committee

NAME: Joy Smith

TITLE: Parent of students in Shawnee Mission School District, PTA member

EMAIL ADDRESS: jlandgraf2@hotmail.com

BILL NUMBER: SB 79 Education Opportunity Tax Credit

HEARING DATE: January 28, 2025

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written-only

Dear Distinguished Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to note my opposition to bill SB 79. I am a parent of two students who currently attend our local public elementary school. Protection of our funding for our public schools is paramount to preserve and maintain the safe and desirable communities that we want to have in Kansas. Public schools are the cornerstones of many communities, particularly those in rural areas, and tax credits of the nature of those proposed will only serve to erode our public education system.

These tax credits will ultimately divert tax dollars away from public education and result in less funding for things that have been proven to work to create strong schools. Additionally, this bill would result in private schools and home schools receiving tax dollars without any public oversight. Private schools may employ uncertified teachers and home schools have no curriculum requirements. I can't think of any greater disservice to our community, the state of Kansas, or our country as a whole, than passing a bill such as this which has the potential to greatly erode the public school system.

I urge you to please oppose **Senate Bill 79**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joy Smith

Overland Park, KS

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025

Nadine Smith

nsmith1959@gmail.com

Retired superintendent USD 107

Chair Erickson and members of the committee:

I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 75. Kansas public schools have a longstanding tradition of excellent academic, job readiness, and positive social-emotional outcomes for students. Kansas public schools teach citizenship, strong work ethic, collaboration, and tolerance among their diverse student populations. As a retired public educator, parent of children who graduated from Kansas public schools, and grandparent of a child on the cusp of entering K-12 Kansas public schools, I oppose SB 75 for the following reasons:

- Tax credits to families for private or home-school education without requiring Kansas educational standards and accountability is unfair and unreasonable.
- Funding private religious schools through tax credits awarded to parents for their children's enrollment in these schools is a violation of separation of church and state.
- Quite frankly, many parents can't be relied upon to use these tax credits for their intended purpose, an appropriate education for their children in a healthy, positive, motivating environment staffed by licensed educators.
- Fully funding public education seems to be a struggle for the Kansas legislature, and the added budget burden estimated in the millions of dollars each year for private education vouchers through massive tax credits will just perpetuate this challenge.

I appreciate your dedication to considering legislation that follows the Constitution and is just for all Kansans, and I urge you to continue to do so by eliminating SB 75 from consideration this session.

Nadine Smith

Testimony against SB 75

Good evening. I would like to thank the chair for allotting me this time to speak and the committee for being here today to listen to me speak. My name is Grace Springer. I am an 18 year old from Lenexa Kansas. I am a senior at Olathe East. Today I want to address The senate bill 75 and the harms that would come from passing the bill.

Firstly, This bill would cause serious harm to public schools funding. As someone who lives in a very privileged area and goes to a very privileged school I can only imagine how the loss of funding will impact school who are not as privileged as mine.

I believe the biggest harms will affect the special education programs. Every year within Kansas there is always a huge debate on the issue of funding schools and I believe the Special Education programs are very rarely considered in these decisions. As someone who has an IEP (individualized education plan) and actively uses the special education programs I have already seen how underfunded these programs are. For example in the past 2-3 years I have not had access to a para (someone who assists with schoolwork). I have watched as our programs have been cut due to a lack of funding, again I live in a very privileged area so I can only imagine how harmful it is to people in more underfunded schools.

Apart from the funding of specific programs I also believe this bill will result in bigger class disparities.

It is a well known fact that children who attend private education are more likely to be upper-class. This affects the educational culture in a few different ways.

- 1) Children are only exposed to children like them, leading to exposure of only other students like them and a decreased understanding of how privilege affects people and empathy
- 2) Public schools and private school become segregated by class, and because most upperclass people are predominantly white these schools reflect that meaning private and public schools have a night and day affect of diversity. Within my educational career I have noticed how this impacts students their emotional intelligence.

This bill is a direct translation of racism and classism. Our state should not stand for this.

Senators I urge you to vote in negation of this bill for students like me who wish to develop skills in relation to empathy and a critical understanding of how diversity impacts our education.

Thank you for your time, I am now open to further questions.

**SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee**

January 28, 2025

Emily Steinwart, emilytsteinwart@gmail.com

Parent in Shawnee Mission school district

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. This is just another way to make the rich richer while leaving the low income and middle classes behind.

Public education is a vital piece of a functioning society. Everyone deserves a chance for a good education. These kinds of school voucher programs take funds away from programs and schools that desperately need them. Those that benefit from the proposed tax credit are most likely already in a position to pay for whatever schooling they choose, while those who are not wealthy are left with few or no options.

I'm asking you to vote no on this and any other atrocious school voucher bills. The majority of Kansans and Americans do not want them. They benefit a very few and harm the majority.

Thank you,
Emily Steinwart

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Courtney Stemler courtney.stemler@gmail.com
Parent in USD 501, Topeka Public Schools

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for your time. I am writing in regards to my opposition to bill SB 75, that provides school vouchers to those who send their children to non-public schools.

As a former public school teacher and parent of a child who attends a public school, I wholeheartedly believe in, have witnessed, and participated in the power of a quality public education. Every student is able to attend a public school to learn, be cared for, and learn from others, regardless of socio-economic status, background, parent education, and location. Quality education is in part made possible by adequate funding, educated professionals, and a partnership between parents and teachers to help children succeed.

By funding non-public schools through the use of vouchers, that only makes some people able to participate in the program, thereby making this form of education only accessible to a few people. Not only would parents have to be able to pay for a private school themselves to begin with, in order to later receive the tax credit, but they would have to live in an area that has non-public school options or have parents that are able to stay home to educate their students. Rural areas often do not have private school options, especially secular private school options. This does not increase options for parents and students. It presents the same options to those that would already participate in non-public education, but they're being financially rewarded for sending their students to a private school.

I would ask that you vote against SB 75 in order to keep public funding in public schools that are accessible to all residents of Kansas.

27 Jan 2025

Chairperson Erickson and Members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in strong opposition to SB 75. This bill seeks to divert state funding from our public schools to private institutions, a move that undermines the foundation of Kansas' public education system and harms the vast majority of students who rely on it.

Public Schools Serve the Majority of Kansas Students

Over 90% of Kansas students attend public schools. These schools are the backbone of our communities, serving students of all backgrounds, abilities, and economic situations. Diverting public funds to private schools takes critical resources away from the institutions that serve the majority, limiting their ability to provide a high-quality education for all.

Lack of Accountability for Private Schools

Public schools operate under strict accountability and transparency measures, ensuring that taxpayer dollars are used effectively. Private schools, on the other hand, are not held to the same academic, financial, or operational standards. SB 75 would shift public funds to schools that are not required to serve all students, including those with disabilities or those from disadvantaged backgrounds, creating inequities in educational access.

Threat to Rural and Underserved Communities

Many rural communities in Kansas do not have access to private schools. Diverting state funds from public schools disproportionately harms these areas, leaving families with fewer resources and fewer options. The focus should be on strengthening our public schools, not siphoning funds away from them.

Public Funds Should Remain in Public Schools

Kansas has a constitutional obligation to provide for a strong public education system. Instead of weakening public schools through voucher programs, we should be investing in teacher salaries, classroom resources, mental health services, and modernized facilities to ensure every child receives a quality education, regardless of their zip code.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to oppose SB 75 and prioritize policies that strengthen, rather than undermine, Kansas public schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Valerie Stone MBA, MLS(ASCP) MB
353 W. Cheyenne St. Gardner, KS 66030
913-980-2111

Thank you,

Val

Valerie Stone MBA, MLS(ASCP)^{cm} MB^{cm}

Clinical Laboratory Manager

9755 Ridge Dr. Lenexa, KS 66219

Tel: 913-410-2475 Mobile: 913-980-2111

Valerie.Stone@iconplc.com

www.ICONplc.com



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SB75

Written only testimony

I am writing to express my deep concern about the growing threat school voucher programs pose to public education, which is a cornerstone of equity and opportunity in our society. Public schools are designed to serve all students, regardless of their background or circumstances, and they play a vital role in strengthening communities and preparing young people for the future.

Voucher programs, however, divert critical funding away from public schools, undermining their ability to provide quality education for the majority of students. These programs often benefit a select few while leaving public schools to manage with diminished resources, larger class sizes, and fewer programs that enrich the learning experience. The result is a two-tiered system that exacerbates inequities and disproportionately harms students in underfunded districts.

Public education thrives on collective investment and shared responsibility. Redirecting taxpayer dollars to private or for-profit schools through vouchers weakens this commitment, threatening the long-term sustainability of a system that serves millions of children nationwide. Instead of expanding voucher programs, we must focus on strengthening public schools by ensuring adequate funding, supporting teachers, and addressing systemic disparities.

I urge you to protect public education by opposing initiatives that siphon resources away from public schools. Our children deserve a robust and equitable public education system that provides every student with the tools they need to succeed.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Beatriz Swerdlow

**SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Allison Taylor buckletaylor@yahoo.com
Parent in Shawnee Mission School District**

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to provide my written opposition to bill SB 75.

I am the parent to two children in Shawnee Mission School District. Both also receive SPED services through the district. My husband and I greatly value public school education and are proud graduates of the Kansas public school system as well. We believe that voucher and tax credit programs divert funds meant for public schools and give to those who have made the CHOICE to educate their children in private schools or other forms of schooling. 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.

We feel that public schools provide a public good to all residents of Kansas. 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.

Please vote not on Bill SB 75 and oppose further school voucher bills as well.
Thank you for your time,
Allison Taylor

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Chad Taylor- Parent of two public school students

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill SB 75. As the parent of a junior at Shawnee Mission East High School and an 8th grader at Indian Hills Middle School, I am strongly opposed to any suggested voucher system. Public funding and tax dollars should remain with the public schools to ensure all students have the same opportunities at a great education.

I have witnessed firsthand how the current district funding is not sufficient to support programs such as the arts (band), sports, reading and math specialists, as well as foreign languages at the elementary level. For years, my wife and I have fundraised to help support these very important programs. When my boys were in elementary school, we participated in the Prairie Fund where a parent lead group raised funds to make up for the lack of funding for very important positions, such as a full-time counselor. We raised upwards of \$100,000 each school year.

Professionally, I am a Realtor, and I know how valuable our public school system is to our community. It not only attracts families to our area, but it also increases the value of our housing. Every homeowner wants their home to increase in value and part of that appreciation is caused by attractive and competitive local schools. If funding for these schools is slashed, the same will happen to home values. When home values drop, tax revenues drop as well. Thus we create a vicious cycle.

Clearly I am against this bill and ask you to vote no on bill SB 75.

Respectfully submitted.

Chad Taylor

4103 Homestead Drive

Prairie Village, KS 66208

913-484-0234

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Chad and Leah Taylor
Realtors (KW KC Metro); Parents of 2 Teenagers (14 & 17); 20+ Year Residents of
Prairie Village, KS

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill SB 75. It is a bit mind boggling to me how we are even entertaining this bill in the year of 2025. North-East Johnson County and Johnson County in general have long been known for outstanding schools, both public and private sector. It is one of the major attractions to investing in home values and communities in our area. This is an issue that we can not make a poor decision on, or even "try to see what will happen". Too many residents and children are at risk.

As a Wyandotte Co native, I attended public school in WyCo until I graduated Sumner Academy. Living in that area and knowing that Sumner Academy was my only viable option for high school was nerve racking as a middle school child. If I didn't get accepted into Sumner, I would have to look for alternative schools in my area and outside of it as well.

However, when my husband and I purchased our first home, we knew that we wanted to invest our money in an area that had strong schools all around and had excellent property values so our investment could grow. Knowing that my kids have fantastic options in both public and private school is of the utmost importance to us as parents. As active Realtors in this area (selling more than 60 homes a year in NE JoCo and the KC Metro area) we hear daily of how important it is to parents to be in an area that they feel like has the best options for their child when it comes to schooling and school choices. To see the home appreciation in the last 5 years and overall, in the last 50 years in Johnson Co is tremendous. Without strong schools of EVERY kind, we will not see strong home values and will not be able to collect the taxes these cities need to continue to keep Johnson Co the wonderful place it is to live. Giving additional tax credits and funding to the private sector only and taking away from our public school system will tremendously hurt both of school districts and the property values of the homes we own. The parks, community events, new developments, sports, and super active residents that we have now will no longer be if we only compensate for a certain type of person who sends their children to a certain type of school. It takes ALL of us to succeed as a community.

As your constituent in Ward 1 of Prairie Village, KS, I ask you to vote NO to Bill SB 75. Thank you for taking the time to read my written opposition to this bill.

Sincerely –
Leah and Chad Taylor

Opponent of SB75
For the Senate Education Committee
Hearing date: January 28, 2025

Susan Thomas
Private citizen/Kansas resident

Kansas Senate Education Committee members,

Please vote NO on SB75. Private schools are not held to the same accountability as our public schools and are able to discriminate in admission. As such, they should not receive public tax dollars. Our public tax dollars should remain in our public schools.

Efforts in other states have proven that vouchers lead to poor academic outcomes, do nothing to curb discriminatory admissions and retention policies, and offer little to no assistance for children with disabilities.

These programs take already scarce funding from public schools—which serve a majority of Kansas students—and give it to private schools that are unaccountable to taxpayers and that are allowed to have and enforce discriminatory entrance policies.

Vouchers are fiscally irresponsible because tax payers end up funding two school systems with public school children receiving less funding, having fewer resources (eg, textbooks, school nurses and counselors, lab equipment, and music and athletic programs) and enduring larger class sizes.

I urge you to support public school children and vote NO on SB75.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Susan Thomas
Kansas City, KS resident

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
[Your First and Last Names]
[Your Title - Parent of future public school children]

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

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

Receiving a quality education is a right of all children, it is a choice to attend an institution outside of the public school system. This choice is not one all families can consider given the financial ramification. Allowing those who CHOOSE and can afford to attend an institution outside of the public system to be compensated for that choice hurts the system that was designed for all children to succeed. The public education system already struggles with funding and a financial change such as this only puts the resources already in short supply at risk.

Vote no on bill SB 75 because it's the right thing to do for our public schools.

Anna + Devon Thorne

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Josh Timmons, jrtimmons@gmail.com

Parent - USD204, Bonner Springs/Edwardsville

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing this testimony in strong opposition to SB 75.

I am a parent of two USD204 students that have progressed through the Bonner Springs/Edwardsville public school system from preschool through their current grades of high school Freshman/Junior. As a result of their public education, they are highly accomplished, involved, and well-rounded students, fully prepared for their next steps to higher education and the workforce. My wife has been a public elementary school teacher for 20+ years, while I personally worked in public school IT for 10 years. In addition, my wife and I are products of the KS public school system (as well as Fort Hays State University, a KS Board of Regents institution.) I feel that we provide a wide range of applicable experience and viewpoints to comment on bill. We have seen first-hand the benefits of a strong public education system where funds are not diluted through the funding of non-public education models.

SB 75 unfairly benefits institutions and home school programs that are not held to the same educational standards and accountability requirements as public schools. Kansas public schools are required to follow rigorous state and federal standards, including certified teacher requirements, standardized testing, comprehensive curriculum guidelines, and special education accommodations. Public schools are also mandated to accept and educate all students, regardless of their background, abilities, or socio-economic status.

By contrast, many private institutions and home schools benefiting from this proposed tax credit are not subject to the same level of scrutiny or oversight. They are not required to hire certified teachers, meet state curriculum standards, provide data on student performance, or offer equitable access to all students. As a result, this legislation would channel public funds toward education models that operate under significantly different—and often less rigorous—standards, creating an uneven playing field.

My strongest opposition to this bill revolves around the negative impact to the funding of public schools. KS has an unfortunate track record of failing to adequately fund public education. By incentivizing

families to leave public schools, SB 75 risks diverting critical tax revenue from a system that serves the majority of Kansas children. This could lead to larger class sizes, reduced resources, and diminished opportunities for the students who remain in public schools. It also undermines the very principles of equity and accountability that public education is built upon.

I urge the committee to carefully consider the broader implications of SB 75. Instead of reallocating resources to programs that lack uniform standards and oversight, we should focus on strengthening our public schools to ensure that every Kansas child has access to high-quality education.

Thank you for your time serving on this committee. I would urge you to vote no on SB75.

Sincerely,

Josh Timmons

329 S 132nd Ter

Bonner Springs, KS 66012

jrtimmons@gmail.com

913-915-3031

January 26, 2025

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to **strongly oppose SB75** and the use of educational savings accounts (ESAs) and vouchers. While marketed as a way to provide school choice, vouchers have a detrimental impact on both the public education system and the broader state budget.

In Wichita and KCK, the diversion of public funds to private schools exacerbates existing inequities. Vouchers do not address the systemic issues that plague urban education, such as student hunger and attendance, outdated facilities, and teacher retention. Instead, they create a further divide between schools that can provide adequate services and those that cannot. This undermines the principle of equal opportunity in education and disproportionately

In our rural Kansas communities, the effects are even more pronounced. With fewer private schools to accommodate voucher students, rural districts often lose critical funding without any real alternative for families. Public schools in these areas are central to community life, and diverting funds away from them destabilizes both the educational system and the communities that depend on it.

Ultimately, vouchers may benefit a small number of families, but they weaken the foundation of public education, which serves the vast majority of students. As a lifelong public educator, I strongly support a system that provides equitable access to quality education for all children.

Karen Tritt
2010 Kansas Teacher of the Year
Retired USD229, USD512

**SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee**

January 28, 2025

Cassandra Trout

Cassijohnston@gmail.com

Parent in 437 district, special education para at TPS501

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. Thank you for your time in this very important matter.

I strongly oppose this bill. As a parent I value my children's access to a public education. As an employee of a public school I witness first hand how underfunded our public school system already is. Taking the funds from our public schools to give to parents that choose to send their children to a private school will be detrimental to our public school system. It will cost funding for jobs and resources that our most fragile children desperately need.

In closing I am begging you to please consider the harmful effects of passing this bill and please vote NO on SB75.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Cassandra Trout

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Alison & Adam Troutwine
Parents in Shawnee Mission School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our 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. 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.

Please vote NO on bill SB 75.

Thank you,
Alison & Adam Troutwine

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee - January 28, 2025
Stacie Turner, Wichita, KS
Grandparent and former parent in Wichita USD 259

Chair Erickson & members of the committee:

Thank you for your service to your constituents and the State of Kansas. I am writing to express my opposition to SB 75, a bill that will irreparably harm public schools and students in Kansas.

As a parent of two USD 259 graduates, I personally recognize and support the role that strong public schools play in every community in our state. Students in Kansas have a constitutional right to quality education supported by Kansas taxpayers, and any attempt to divert funds to private schools in the form of vouchers or tax credits is a direct threat to public education, which serves the public good.

I have a grandchild in USD 259 now who receives Special Education services. It is imperative that public tax dollars go to *only public schools* to provide the vital education services my grandchild needs and every Kansas child with special needs is entitled to. The legislature should be focusing its attention on fully funding Special Education, which is currently underfunded by over \$170 million.

School vouchers are a scam to taxpayers and have failed in many other conservative states, creating exponential fiscal disasters. One has merely to do a basic Google search to see that Arizona now has a massive \$1.4 *billion* budget deficit in FY24 and FY25 because of their botched school voucher program. Their program was also rife with corruption and had no accountability. Kansas is in a very tight fiscal position, especially with future tax cuts on the horizon, and cannot afford to fund any additional tax credits to parents who choose to send their children to private schools. This especially applies to parents with the financial means to pay for private school tuition out of their own pockets (which they are already doing). There is a reason that voters overwhelmingly rejected school vouchers in ballot initiatives in other states last year, including Nebraska and Kentucky -- Americans do not want taxpayer dollars to fund private schools, including religious schools, especially not at the expense of public school funding.

Most parents in Kansas already have the choice to homeschool their kids or send them to private schools; however, private schools have never been on a level playing field with public schools. Until private schools are required to accept *any and all* students and are prohibited from discriminating against any students due to special needs, race, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, etc., they are not entitled to one dime of taxpayer revenue.

Further, rural Kansas communities will be hurt the most from the passing of reckless school voucher legislation, as residents in those areas have little to no other private educational options. These tax credits will unfairly 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 if this legislation is passed.

In closing, you must vote NO on SB 75. It is our moral imperative to reject gimmicky vouchers and tax credits and, instead, fully fund and support public education in Kansas. It is the only equitable solution to continued quality of life and prosperity for every family in our state.

Thank you for your time.

Stacie Turner
Wichita, KS

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Allison Tuttle, alituttle@gmail.com

Parent in Shawnee Mission School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

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

I have firsthand experience with Kansas public schools, as both my children have attended them since kindergarten. While they received an excellent education, I noticed that achieving this quality required funding beyond what the state provided. We were fortunate to live in an area where families and businesses could contribute additional resources. However, this creates an inherent inequity among public schools across different communities. I oppose this bill because it would divert funds that could strengthen our public education system—which serves all children—to support families who have opted for private or religious education, most of whom can already afford these alternatives. If passed, this legislation would only widen the existing disparities in educational opportunities across our state.

In closing, I am asking you to vote no on bill SB 75.

Thank you for your time and your representation of the public in the matters of Education in Kansas.

Allison Tuttle

JANUARY 27, 2025

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO BILL SB 75 SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NAME: JODIE VICKERS: PARENT OF THREE STUDENTS IN SHAWNEE MISSION SCHOOL DISTRICT, LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS OWNER

EMAIL ADDRESS: JODIE.VICKERS@GMAIL.COM

ELECTED OFFICIALS: CHAIR ERICKSON AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

I APPRECIATE THE YOUR TIME TO HEAR MY OPPOSITION TO BILL SB75.

I, A CHILD OF A KANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATOR AND ADMINISTRATOR, A STUDENT OF KANSAS SCHOOLS (LSD497) AND A CURRENT PARENT OF STUDENTS IN SMSD SCHOOL DISTRICT, I CAN NOT EXPRESS ENOUGH THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM AND ENSURING EQUALITY TO ALL STUDENTS IN THE STATE OF KANSAS, NOT JUST THE ONES WITH THE PRIVILEGE OF A PRIVATE EDUCATION.

KANSAS TAX DOLLARS MUST EXCLUSIVELY FUND OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

EDUCATION TAX CREDITS UNDERMINE THE FUNDING, PROMISED TO ALL STUDENTS, PUBLIC SCHOOLS SO DESPERATELY NEED TO STRENGTHEN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

FUND OUR SCHOOLS, FULLY!

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT FUNDS NOT BE DIVERTED TO SUBSIDIZE THE PRIVATE CHOICES OF SOME, PRIVILEGED, PREDOMINANTLY WHITE CITIZENS, WHILE UNDERMINING THE EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITIES OF OTHERS.

ELECTED OFFICIALS VOTING IN SUPPORT OF SB75 ARE VOTING TO FURTHER UPLIFT THE PRIVILEGED POPULATION, PROMOTING THE REPUBLICAN GOAL OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE STATE OF KANSAS. DISGUSTING!

A BETTER USE OF TAX PAYER FUNDS BY ELECTED OFFICIALS ON THIS COUNCIL IS TO FULLY FUND OUR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS, I HAVE A CHILD WHOM WAS ABANDONED BY THE STATE OF KANSAS BY UNDERFUNDING OF SPECIAL EDUCATION. THIS MUST STOP.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS DO NOT OFFER EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ALL APPLICANTS. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, AND MINORITIES WILL SUFFER IF YOU DON'T ABANDON BILL SB75.

ELIMINATING FUNDING TO OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS ELIMINATES THE BEST WE CAN GIVE KANSAS, TODAY AND FOR THE FUTURE. WEALTHY FAMILIES WHOM PREFER PRIVATE SCHOOLS ARE ALREADY PROVIDING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THEIR CHILDREN WITHOUT ASSISTANCE FROM TAX PAYERS AT THEIR OWN CHOICE. LEAVE THEM TO THEIR CHOICE AND CONTINUE USING PUBLIC FUNDS TO FUND PUBLIC CHOICES, NOT THE CHOICES OF THE PRIVILEGED.

ELIMINATING FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS WHILE VOTING TO MOVING FORWARD WITH ANY VOUCHER PROGRAM IS YOU, AS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL VOTING FOR THE DEMISE OF KANSAS EDUCATION, ALL STUDENTS IN THE STATE OF KANSAS AND THE PROGRESS AND SUCCESS OF THE FUTURE OF THE STATE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR LISTENING EARS, I AM HOPEFUL YOU WILL LISTEN TO YOUR CONSTITUENTS AND MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR ALL KANSAS CHILDREN AND VOTE AGAINST VOUCHERS FOR KANSAS SCHOOLS.

Dr. Connie Wehmeyer, PH.D.

Director of Teaching and Learning, FourPoint Education Partners

connie@fourpointeducation.com

Regarding: SB 75 Tax Credit Voucher Bill

Opponent: SB 75 Tax Credit Voucher Bill

Chair Thompson and members of the committee:

SB 75 Tax Credit without accountability to student learning is a mistake. I am writing to express my **opposition** of the proposed SB 75 Tax Credit Voucher Bill with the following reasons:

The bill lacks of accountability. There is no accountability to ensure that the money is actually spent educating children. Without accountability, there are children who may not receive an adequate education. I have seen first-hand homeschool situations where the student is simply at “home” not schooled. Moreover, I have seen state and federal dollars awarded to third party vendors where no outcome of learning is demanded. There must be accountability to any state or federal dollars to ensure that all students are learning to high levels.

The bills foster unaccredited schools to emerge without any guidance or accountability—not just home schools but other for profit groups. Kansas Citizens deserve to know the outcome of their tax dollars paid to those receiving the vouchers.

Splintering the limit public funds to include vouchers for private schools further limits what public education can do for students. As an education consulting for the past 15 years I have worked in many states across the US and have seen first-hand what happens when state budgets get raped of funds—buildings fall, good teachers leave, and our students suffer.

Vote NO on SB 75 Tax Credit Voucher Bill.

Respectfully,

Connie Wehmeyer, PH.D.

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 29, 2025

Lesley Weigel (lesleyweigel@gmail.com)

Parent in USD 308 School District

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing this testimony in opposition to SB 75 because the tax implications will directly impact our family. I am a single parent to a child who will be entering Kindergarten (on an IEP). Due to not receiving child support because of flaws in the system, the lack of a tax credit will further disadvantage our household. Presently, as a single-income household, I do not have the option of even considering sending my child to private school. While I feel households should have that choice, I do not see the benefit of extending tax cuts to those who have the disposable income to consider this in the first place.

Thank you for your time serving on this committee. I would urge you to vote no on SB 75.

Lesley Weigel

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 26, 2025

Sierra Whitted, sierra.taul@gmail.com

Parent in Shawnee Mission school district, private citizen

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

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

I value public schools and the opportunities they provide all children, including my two sons. Our oldest loves his class and we have seen how well his reading, math skills, and confidence has blossomed while being part of the Shawnee Mission school district.

We should be focusing on improving our public education to provide that experience for all kids instead of using tax dollars to fund private institutions that could reject students and leave them with an underfunded public system. We could instead be using these funds to strengthen our special needs programs and appropriately compensating and attracting skilled teachers.

In addition, I feel more comfortable with my tax dollars going to public education where I know there is accountability and a standard of quality education.

I am asking you to vote no on bill SB 75.

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025

Amanda Winch, amanda.winch@gmail.com
Parent in the Olathe School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for your time and dedication to public education in Kansas. I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 75.

My husband and I chose to make Johnson County our home even before having children, drawn by the outstanding public schools in the area. Public education is a vital public good that benefits everyone, and we have been extremely pleased with the quality of education our children are receiving.

As parents of a neurodivergent child, we are especially grateful for the services provided through his Individualized Education Plan (IEP). It is clear to us that these services are essential, not only for our son but for many other children with special needs. These programs help to build a stronger, more inclusive society. However, it is evident that our public schools often operate under significant strain, doing more with less to meet the needs of all students.

This is why I strongly oppose diverting funding away from public schools. Families who choose private schools typically have the financial means to do so, and taking resources from public education only further diminishes the support available for students who rely on it most. Public funds should remain dedicated to public schools to ensure all Kansas children have access to a high-quality, equitable education.

Please help our Kansas communities thrive by ensuring that public money stays with public schools. Diverting funds to private institutions undermines the right to an equitable education for all students.

I respectfully urge you to vote NO on SB 75.

Thank you for your consideration.

Oral Testimony in Opposition of SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 27, 2025
Erin Woods, private citizen

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

As a Kansas taxpayer and the parent of two recent graduates who attended Kansas public schools, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75.

Kansans understand that our tax dollars are used to fund our excellent public school system that ensures Kansas kids receive a quality education that will serve them and their communities well. Public schools are a public good and our tax dollars are meant to fund public goods. Over 90% of Kansas kids attend public school.

Our tax dollars should not be given to other Kansans via a tax credit to pay for their personal choice to send their children to a private school or to homeschool their children. This bill would provide a refundable tax credit of \$24,000 to a family with three children attending a private school, regardless of income, their actual tax liability, or actual tuition costs.

SB 75 allows for tax avoidance and creates a windfall for families opting out of public school. Most Kansas receiving these tax credits will not only see their state tax liability reduced to zero, but they will receive a hefty refund.

Simplifying the math to a 5% tax rate (highest rate in KS is 5.58%) and disregarding any additional deductions or other tax credits a family may be eligible for, here is what it looks like for a family with three kids and an income of \$100,000:

- **Tax liability before tax credit:** \$5,000 owed to the state
($\$100,000 \times 5\%$)
- **Refundable tax credit:** \$24,000
(3 kids \times \$8,000)
- **Tax Refund:** \$19,000
($\$24,000 - \$5,000$)

Not only does the tax credit reduce the family's tax liability to \$0, but the state is essentially paying them \$19,000 **every year** out of the state general fund to not attend public school.

As taxpayers, we have no accountability over those funds. And now, as the rest of us continue to contribute to the greater good of our state to ensure Kansas kids are receiving an excellent education and that our roads and bridges are maintained, most of these families will contribute nothing, simply because they chose to forgo a public good.

Many of these families will also receive more in tax credits than they pay in tuition. At a well-attended Catholic school near me, tuition for three kids is \$11,180. The family in the above

example would receive almost \$13,000 in discretionary income from the state. Money contributed by other families across the state. Kansans who live in rural areas and don't have the option to attend a private school couldn't benefit from this lucrative tax credit and the same for others whose child wouldn't be accepted by a private school.

It is inconceivable that Kansas taxpayers should foot the bill for someone's private education. We have excellent public schools and our tax dollars should be used to invest in public education, starting with fully funding special education.

Though I appreciate the legislature restoring some of the special education funding shortfall last year, we must continue that investment until the state has met its obligation to fund 92% of excess costs. Because districts have to cover the shortfall from the state for mandated services out of their operating budgets, all kids are impacted by this underfunding. Remember, our public schools provide special education and transportation for kids in private school too.

Knowing there is a shortfall in special education funding, why would we now want to put the state on the hook for funding two brand new education systems — private and homeschool? If we can't afford to fully fund special education, the state surely cannot afford this program.

Quite simply, this bill is a voucher program in disguise. Kansans made it known in 2023 when the legislature was trying to pass the Education Savings Account voucher program that we do not want vouchers in our state. Vouchers divert scarce public dollars to private schools (and home schools) that lack accountability and are allowed to discriminate in admissions for any number of reasons.

It's time to stop the voucher train in Kansas and start fully funding our public schools by fully funding special education. Public tax dollars belong with our public schools that accept and educate all Kansas kids.

Please vote NO on bill SB 75.

Erin Woods
Leawood, KS

February 5, 2025

Katie Yang
6991 141st ST
Basehor, KS 66007

Dear Educational Committee,

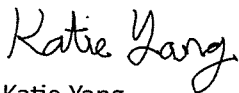
I am writing to share my testimony and express my strong opposition to SB75, the Educational Opportunity Tax Credit. I urge you to vote "no" on this bill.

My husband and I are proud to have raised our children in the state of Kansas. Our son graduated Basehor-Linwood high school in 2024. During high school, he utilized the Excel in CTE program, passed by former Governor Brownback, to attend KCKCC and earn a certificate in Electrical Technology. His education at the Basehor-Linwood school district was rigorous, he had many fantastic teachers including our state representative Tim Johnson, and his public-school education prepared him for his career as an inside wireman. Our daughter is a junior at Basehor-Linwood high school. Again, Basehor-Linwood is an excellent school district and it is the heart of our small town. My daughter is taking honors and college credit classes. She is also taking the Certified Nursing Assistant class, in conjunction with KCKCC, and she hopes to become a Registered Nurse after high school. Both of our children have been involved in school clubs and sports. Our experience with Kansas public schools has been phenomenal.

I am deeply concerned about the negative impact that generous tax credits—\$8,000 per student enrolled in an accredited private school and \$4,000 per student in non-accredited schools or homeschooling—will have on our state budget. In contrast, public schools receive only \$5,378 per student, creating a significant funding disparity that unfairly benefits private institutions at the expense of our high-quality, award-winning public schools. This imbalance not only diverts essential resources from public education but also undermines the equitable distribution of funds that supports all students. Moreover, Kansas already provides families with an option to address concerns about local school performance through unrestricted open enrollment, allowing them to transfer their child to another public school within the state. Therefore, investing in tax credits for private education is unnecessary.

In Kansas, the vast majority of students attend public schools, while only about 10% are enrolled in private institutions. Yet, a new bill proposes using taxpayer dollars to support private education through tax credits. Proponents argue that tax credits will make private school tuition more affordable and accessible, but this assumption is misleading. In practice, private schools often raise tuition prices in response to increased public funding. This approach risks increasing educational inequality by fostering segregation and reducing accountability, as private schools have selective admissions and are not subject to the same rigorous standards as public schools. I urge you to stand with public education and vote "no" on SB75.

Sincerely,



Katie Yang
Ph (913) 485-2058



Written Opponent on SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Dr. Brent Yeager
Superintendent, Olathe Public Schools

Chairwoman Erickson and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Olathe Public Schools, I am submitting written opposition testimony on Senate Bill 75 that creates an income tax credit for non-public schools and entities.

Olathe Public Schools relies on the leadership of our elected school board members to guide key policy priorities that benefit our students. The Board-approved Legislative Statement for 2025 includes the following statement:

- *We support using **public dollars to support public schools** and oppose programs, including vouchers, education saving accounts, opportunity scholarships, tax credit scholarships, tuition tax credits as well as individual tax credits and deductions allowing guardians to receive state income tax relief for approved educational expenses, that divert public funding from public education to schools that are not held to the same legal requirements as public schools.*

Senate Bill 75 specifically includes a number of provisions that provide funds to families through a refundable tax credit up to \$8,000 per child for use in non-public schools and homeschools at a cost of \$125 million per year. Among our specific concerns and reasons for our opposition are the following.

- SB 75 provides for automatic cost accelerators to the public as high as 25 percent per year.
- The refundable tax benefit means even those with no tax liability will receive the benefit.
- The taxpayer funds would pay families for the cost of buying services from organizations that:
 - Recipients are not required to serve all students.
 - Recipients can discriminate in the students they admit.
 - Recipients are allowed to reject students with special education needs.
 - Recipients have little or no accountability and oversight over how public funds are spent.

These features of Senate Bill 75 are directly opposed to the policies our Board has adopted. We have many issues to address together to improve and enhance the historical commitment to public education. We look forward to working with you on a great number of other issues, but Senate Bill 75 reduces resources to address the issues that face every child, family, teacher, and public school.



Thank you for your continued support for funding Kansas public schools.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Yeager", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Brent Yeager, Superintendent
Olathe Public Schools

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Julia Young, juliakyoung@msn.com

Private citizen, retired public school teacher, tax payer

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for your service to Kansas, and thank you for reading my written testimony.

I ask you to vote NO on SB 75. Public schools are an important part of a community, any and every community in Kansas. Those schools educate about 90% of Kansas' children. The general fund, which provides for public schools, also provides for other services such as public safety and human services. SB 75 has the potential to cost \$125 million dollars a year. That money would have to reduce other services our citizens deserve, especially public education.

Please VOTE NO on SB 75.

Thank you,

Julia Young

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Julie Utt, utt857@gmail.com
Private Citizen, Winfield, KS

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing this email to share my concerns about SB75 – school vouchers. Please consider my comments when weighing out the pros and cons of this bill.

I am tax payer and I attended public schools for 12 years in a rural Kansas community.

Public schools are the backbone of Kansas. Without quality education students will not succeed, not be able to support their families and communities will suffer. Employers will not be able to hire qualified workers and may be forced to move their company to a location where it can be profitable.

Public tax dollars belong with public schools:

- Tax dollars for education should remain with public schools that accept and educate all children. Public schools are accountable to taxpayers.
- Education Tax Credits move money out of public schools to Kansas families who have made a choice to send their children to religious or non-public schools. These schools are not accountable to taxpayers and in some cases are not even located in Kansas.

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

- Private schools pick the children they want to serve. Children with special needs, or those that do not speak English as their first language are less likely to be accepted.
- Private and/or public schools are not available in most of the communities in Kansas. Once again rural communities would be left out of the equation.

Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy

- Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share.
- Families who can afford the choice of private school with greatly benefit. Public education and

other services will pay the price.

Public schools are a public good

- Strong public education provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual student.
- We all desire good communities. Public schools make communities better.

As a Kansan, I have tried to be involved in legislative decisions by sharing my views with my State representative and Senator over the years. These are my thoughts and I hope you will listen to the concerns expressed to you when considering this extremely important bill.

Tax revenue is necessary to maintain Kansas as a good place to raise families, make a living, be safe, get quality health care and enjoy life. The fiscal impact of SB75 will quickly destroy public education and many other quality of life issues in Kansas. I worked as a State employee during the Brownback years and personally know how quickly our good State was in financial trouble. Please do not let that happen again by giving away tax money to families who don't choose public education. Vote NO on SB75.

Opponent SB75

SB75 has been rushed such that opponents won't realize what is happening. This is a government expansion into the lives of our students. **ONLY** parents are the ones to make decisions for their children.

Gaylene Van Horn

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Nicole Vela, Mission, KS

Parent in Shawnee Mission School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Please vote NO on SB 75.

Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers. If this bill passes it will be detrimental to children in our community who need the support of public schools.

Thanks, Nicole Vela

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Ashley Webb, amw718@yahoo.com

Private citizen residing in Prairie Village

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for all you do to advocate for the betterment and benefit of *all* Kansans.

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

I graduated from Highland High School (now Doniphan West) with a graduating class of 21. In many of the rural areas of this state, options for schools are limited and communities rely on the commitment, personal sacrifice and dedication of incredible teaching staff.

While I appreciate that our legislature is looking for solutions to benefit every family, **public tax dollars should remain with public schools**. This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools to serve ALL kids and gives it to families who have made a private choice or a religious or other non-public education.

I do not believe that my hard earned tax dollars deserve to be used without oversight or accountability.

Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, whether they use them or not. A strong public education system provides benefit to the community and entire society, not just to individual students.

For these reasons and more, I ask you to vote no on bill SB 75.

Thank you,

Ashley



Stephanie Whitehead <stephaniewhitehead18@gmail.com>

SB 75 Written Opposition Testimony

Stephanie Whitehead <stephaniewhitehead18@gmail.com>
To: S.Education@senate.ks.gov

Mon, Jan 27, 2025 at 10:43 AM

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

Dear Members of the Legislature,

I'm writing to share my concerns about the proposed tax credit for private school tuition. As someone who has children in public schools, I've seen firsthand the value they provide—not just to my own family, but to our entire community. Public schools are a vital part of our society, and I believe we should be investing more in them, not diverting money away.

The money we all pay in taxes should go to public schools—schools that are open to all kids and are accountable to the public. This proposed tax credit will take money that could help strengthen public schools and instead give it to families who choose private schools. Many of these families can afford private education already, so why should taxpayers foot the bill?

Instead of giving tax breaks to people who don't need them, I urge you to focus on fully funding public education, especially special education, which is currently underfunded by \$173 million. Our public schools need that money to continue supporting all kids, including those with disabilities, English language learners, and those in low-income areas.

Private schools are selective about who they accept. This means many kids, especially those with special needs, disabilities, or language barriers, won't have access to private education even if their families want it. The proposed tax credit doesn't fix this issue—it just helps families who already have the resources to pay for private education while leaving out those who could benefit most.

This program ends up being a form of welfare for the wealthy. It gives a break to families who can already afford private school tuition, while public schools—which serve everyone—lose out on funding.

Public schools are a public service, and we all benefit from them, whether we have kids in school or not. They educate the future workforce, foster civic engagement, and help create informed citizens. It doesn't make sense to take taxpayer money and give it to private schools that are only accessible to a few.

We don't subsidize private alternatives for other public services, like libraries or national parks, so why should we do it for education? A strong public education system benefits everyone in the state.

Another concern is that there's no real oversight of how this money would be spent. Private schools and homeschools don't have the same accountability standards as public schools. How can we be sure that our tax dollars are being used effectively if we don't even know what's going on behind closed doors?

This bill is especially harmful to rural communities. Public schools in rural areas already struggle with limited resources, and this tax credit would take away even more funding from them. Many rural areas don't have private school options, so rural families won't see any benefit from this. Instead, taxpayers in rural areas will be subsidizing private schools in cities like Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka, while their own public schools continue to face budget shortfalls.

In short, this tax credit for private school tuition isn't the right way to go. It takes away from public schools and benefits families who already have the means to pay for private education. Instead of reducing funding for public schools, we should be investing more to ensure every child in Kansas gets a great education. Please reconsider this bill and focus on supporting our public schools, which serve all kids, regardless of their background.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Whitehead
Johnson County, KS
Parent, Educator, Public School Employee

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 27, 2025

Janelle Will-Sachs (janelle.willsachs@gmail.com)

Concerned Parent/Public School Convert

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

My husband and I are Christian parents of a Christian children. We are products of two different parochial elementary schools and a parochial high school, where we graduated two years apart. We later met and married and started a family. Our children started out their educations in a parochial school until our family needs changed. Our youngest at the time had significant health conditions that required a nurse and special educators and special education resources that the parochial school simply could not provide. We ended up transferring our children to public schools in USD 437, where they have both thrived academically, emotionally, and socially. When our third child came along, we enrolled her in USD 437, and she is also receiving an excellent education.

I have *plenty* of firsthand experience with both parochial and public schools in Topeka. While I believe parents have the right to choose where to send their children to school (based on what they feel is best for their children and families), my greatest concern with offering these tax credits ("vouchers") is diverting already stretched public funding away from public schools, where the higher population of students of special needs are already attending and benefiting from pooled resources within the schools. Special education and general education funds are already inadequate to meet the needs of the teachers and students (hard hitting some schools and districts harder than others). I fear that diverting funds away from public schools would be catastrophic for children like mine who require these services, just to make it through a single school day.

Since time is short and you're literally about to debate this bill in committee, I will simply attach additional information provided by the National Coalition for Public Education as a less personal yet critically important part of my personal testimony.

I urge you to consider the greater good here and reject any and all bills that jeopardize public education and the welfare of your youngest and most vulnerable constituents.

Thank you for your time and your dedication.

Janelle Will-Sachs
Topeka, Kansas

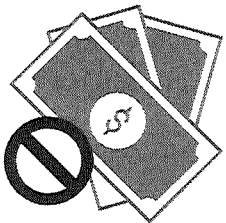
Fast Facts:

How School Vouchers Harm Students, Schools, & Communities

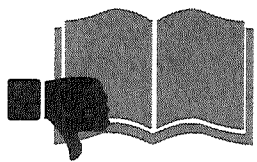
Private school vouchers take many names, including “scholarship” programs, tuition tax credits, education savings accounts, and portability plans. Regardless of what they are called, they use public dollars to fund private schools and divert scarce resources away from the public education system that serves 90% of American children.



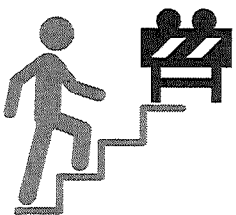
Private school vouchers undermine public schools by diverting desperately needed resources away from the public school system, which accepts all students, to fund the education of a few, select voucher students. Given the fiscal constraints at the federal, state, and local level, we simply cannot afford to fund two different education systems—one public and one private—on our taxpayers’ dime.



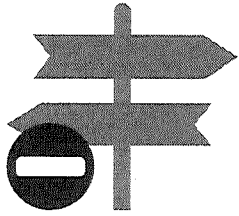
Private school vouchers do not save taxpayer money. In voucher programs, the public schools from which students leave for private voucher schools are spread throughout a school district. The reduction in a few students from each public school, therefore, does not decrease operating costs like building maintenance and transportation. But it does decrease the amount of money the public school has to spend. That is one of the reasons why some voucher programs have resulted in multi-million dollar deficits and tax increases.



Private school vouchers do not improve academic achievement. Repeated studies of voucher programs across the country show that vouchers do not result in better test scores for students, and, in many states, have led to declines in academic achievement.



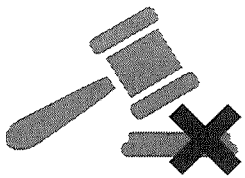
Private school vouchers do not lead to improvements in public schools. There are many proven ways to improve public schools such as reducing class sizes, offering a well-rounded curriculum, and increasing parental engagement. Resourcing our neighborhood public schools so that students have inviting classrooms, well-trained teachers, and support services such as health care, nutrition, and afterschool programs will ensure our children can compete in the global economy. Vouchers do not fund any of these improvements, and in fact, make it harder for public schools to implement them.



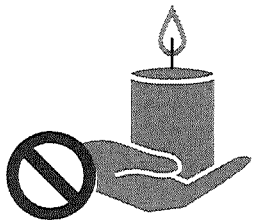
Private school vouchers do not offer real choice. Vouchers give a choice to private schools, rather than parents and students. Voucher programs are governed by different laws in different states, but most allow private schools to accept taxpayer dollars but still reject students with vouchers for a variety of reasons, ranging from disability to ability to pay. And even with vouchers, most parents still cannot afford the full cost of attending a private school.



Private school vouchers fail to provide accountability to taxpayers. Most voucher programs lack accountability measures, and according to studies of voucher programs, many also lack proper oversight to ensure they meet even the minimal standards that do exist.



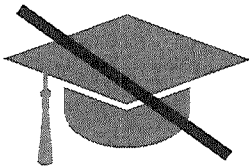
Private voucher schools do not provide students with the same rights and protections they would otherwise have in public schools, such as those in Title VI, Title IX, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Every Student Succeeds Act. And students who attend private schools using vouchers are stripped of the First Amendment, due process, and other constitutional and statutory rights guaranteed to them in public schools.



Private school vouchers violate the fundamental principle of religious freedom because they pay for religious education with taxpayer funds. They also threaten the autonomy of religious schools by opening them up to government audits, control, and interference.



Private voucher schools do not adequately serve students with disabilities, often failing to admit them or provide them the same quality and quantity of services available to students in public schools, including those mandated under each student's individualized education program (IEP).



Private school vouchers do not adequately serve low-income students because the cost of tuition and fees at schools that accept vouchers generally exceeds the amount of the voucher, making voucher schools unaffordable for most low-income families.



Private school vouchers often fund poor quality schools. Because voucher programs lack accountability and oversight, vouchers often fund poor quality schools, including those that employ teachers with no credentials, operate in dilapidated buildings, lack proper facilities like restrooms, and teach questionable curriculum.

SB 75 Opposition Testimony – written only

Senate Education Committee

January 27, 2025

From

Cassandra Woolworth

306 N Pinon St, Olathe, KS 66061

CassieWoolworth@Gmail.com

Parent/Citizen in the Olathe School District 233

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I'm writing to voice my opposition to SB75. I graduated from the Olathe Public School system; I had children graduate from the Olathe Public School System, and am planning on having grandkids go to the Olathe Public School System. I have seen the extensive data that shows Vouchers KILL public schools*. Public money should go to Public Schools. Period.

Public dollars spent need to be measured. All schools across Kansas should have the SAME standards – but not 'no standards' which are often at Voucher schools. 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.

No where can we say we 'measure' our spending on Vouchers – and WHY NOT? In my honest opinion, vouchers only serve to keep children OUT not include everyone. Voucher schools do not have the Special Education requirement that comes with public schools. You will do a disservice to all the IEP kids when you put public dollars towards PRIVATE schools. 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. 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.

Should you decide to vote yes on vouchers, you will be killing western Kansas. There is no way we should put PUBLIC MONEY towards PRIVATE Schools. Public dollars should be used for Public Schools.

- Resource: <https://www.ksvt.org/updates/5-key-takeaways-from-the-states-with-vouchers#:~:text=Vouchers%20Do%20Not%20Lead%20to,results%20compared%20to%20their%20peers>.