

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Shannon Adams
Parent in Brookwood Elementary School, Shawnee Mission Schools

Chair Erickson and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill SB 75. I have five children: three have graduated from high school and college, and two are currently in elementary school. I am someone who understands the value of our public schools in order to continue to educate our society and to continue to create and maintain the vitality of our communities. I strongly oppose this bill and/or voucher programs in general.

Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children. Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education. Private schools are not available to all and private schools get to choose who to accept. 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.

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. Additionally, rural students and communities are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.

In conclusion, I implore you to vote against bill SB 75. Save public education. Save our children's futures and communities.

With much respect,
Shannon Adams

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

Becky Anderson becky.anderson418@gmail.com

I am a grandparent with grandchildren in the Shawnee Mission School District and the Blue Valley School district. I have a daughter in law and a daughter who are teacher and administrator in both of those districts. They both work very hard for our children.

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. Our public schools need all the funding they can get in order to make our public schools the best they can be. This bill will deplete those funds and therefore be harmful to our public schools. Our public schools are for ALL our children and not just the few who can afford private schools or choose to send their children to private schools. That is a choice for the parents to make, but our tax dollars should not be used for the few.

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.

A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system.

In closing I would just like to state the obvious. Giving tax credit or vouchers for private school attendance is simply wrong. We do not need to deplete funds from our public schools that are for all children and not just the wealthy. Please vote against this injustice.

Thank you,
Becky Anderson

Opponent Testimony on Senate Bill 75

For the Senate Education Committee

Date of Hearing: January 28, 2025

Jason Anderson

Citizen

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide *opponent* testimony on Senate Bill 75. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of my family and other Kansas residents who share similar concerns.

My family chose to make Kansas our home because of its strong public schools. We have been continually impressed by the quality of education, the dedication of our local public-school teachers, and the supportive environment these institutions create. In fact, many families—including ours—moved here specifically because of Kansas's reputation for having excellent public schools.

Under SB 75, families receive a refundable tax credit of up to \$8,000 per child for choosing a private school, which could exceed a family's tax liability and result in a *net profit* for opting out of public schools. This structure raises significant concerns:

1. Risk of Profiteering

Because the tax credit is fully refundable, there is a realistic possibility that some families will receive more money back than they actually spend on tuition—effectively profiting from private-school enrollment. While easing the tuition burden may be a legitimate policy goal, offering more than what families pay to educate their children diverts public dollars to private settings with minimal accountability.

2. Erosion of Public Schools

Public schools are already doing a commendable job with finite resources. Encouraging students to leave public schools, especially with an incentive that may exceed actual educational costs, drains resources and undermines the very institutions that made Kansas a magnet for families like mine. This legislation could weaken public education funding and quality over time if large numbers of families seek to capitalize on such a refundable credit.

3. Equity Concerns

Although the bill prohibits double-dipping with the low-income scholarship program, the broad availability of the proposed tax credit (including for non-accredited private schools) may funnel public tax dollars into schools without the same oversight or standards that public schools must adhere to. In addition, Kansas's strong public schools typically serve *all* students, including those with special needs; there is no guarantee that private

institutions accepting these tax-credit-supported families will offer equivalent services.

4. Preservation of Excellence

Our family's primary reason for moving to Kansas was the opportunity our children have in the public-school system. If public enrollment declines while state money flows to private institutions—even beyond the actual cost of tuition—Kansas risks undermining the qualities that currently attract new families and businesses.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to *reject* SB 75. Kansas has built an admirable public education system that supports families across a wide range of backgrounds. The current proposal compromises that legacy by incentivizing moves away from public schools—potentially creating a profit motive and drawing away resources that keep our public schools strong.

Thank you, Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, for considering my testimony in opposition to SB 75. I welcome any questions and appreciate your service and dedication to Kansas students.

Sincerely,

Jason Anderson

Submitted electronically to:

Committee Assistant Cyndie Rexer
s.Education@senate.ks.gov

I am writing in opposition to SB 75.

Pubic tax dollars belong with public schools:

- ***Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers.***
- ***Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program.***
- ***Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans choosing not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education that is currently underfunded by \$173 million.***

Thanking you for your service and for opposing SB 75.

Belinda Andrews-Brumfield

Pittsburg, KS 66762

Dear Senate Education Committee,

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

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

- **Weakened Public Schools:** As public dollars are siphoned away, public schools face budget cuts, leading to larger class sizes, fewer resources, and reduced programming—disproportionately affecting students in rural and low-income areas.
- **Limited Accountability:** Non-credentialed organizations and private schools often lack the same transparency and accountability standards required of public schools, leaving families with fewer protections and guarantees of quality education.
- **Worsened Inequity:** These programs primarily benefit wealthier families, as vouchers often fail to cover the full cost of private tuition, leaving lower-income families without access while public schools lose funding.

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

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

Sincerely,

Shana Arnhold

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Sara Askew, sarabrooke@gmail.com
Parent of students in Maize, USD 266

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

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

I attended private schools K-12, and started my kids at private school as well. I have three children. Two of them have attended both private and public school. My youngest has only attended public school. The private school my children attended prior to switching to Maize USD 266 could not meet their academic needs, nor were they required to by law. Public education has absolutely been the answer for my kids. If parents receive tax refunds to pay for their kids to attend private schools (that do not have to meet standards), kids attending public school will suffer greatly. At a time when special education is not fully funded, the legislature's focus should be on fully funding public education, not diverting funds to pay for private schools. Kids attending rural schools will also suffer. There are not private school options for them, and their only option for school will not receive the funds it needs to educate our many kids living in rural Kansas. Having attended private school myself, and having sent kids to private schools, I know some of the benefits they have. However, I firmly believe they should not be tax payer funded. Good public schools increase the value of our properties. If our public schools suffer, our home values will suffer as well. And no Kansans want that. We do not need vouchers acting as welfare for the wealthy. We need to fund our public schools. Funding those schools will raise all Kansans, by improving our communities and helping the majority of students and families that attend them.

In closing I ask you to vote no on bill SB 75.

Sara Askew
Wichita

January 27, 2025

Garrett Aves, garrettaves17@gmail.com

Private Citizen and parent of a child attending USD 308

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing this testimony in opposition to SB 75 because my taxes should not be helping fund someone else's CHOICE to not send their child to a public school. I have heard so much complaining from people about cost of living, groceries, etc. If this is true, why should taxpayer money go toward helping someone who has elected to pay thousands of dollars to send their child to a privately funded institution? It's time our state started adequately funding public education which is a pillar of society and made this country so great long ago.

My mother was a public school teacher, my wife is a public school teacher, and both my children will complete their education through our wonderful school system in USD 308. The learning opportunities experienced by attending public schools is not limited to academics alone, but through learning from other students from a wide variety of backgrounds and demographics that create well rounded citizens. Please do not kneecap public schools by giving in to demands of constituents who have CHOSEN to send their child to a private school. There is nothing wrong with private schools or homeschooling, but it is a choice parents can make.

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

Sincerely,

Garrett Aves

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 27, 2025
Tracy Baack
Parent in the Olathe Public School District

Chair Erickson and members of the committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts in **opposition** to bill SB 75.

I am a parent of four students in the Olathe Public School District. I am also the PTA president at our elementary school, and I am a certified volunteer as well as a substitute teacher. Additionally, our church serves as a community partner for one of the middle schools in the Olathe District, and I am the point person from our church to meet with the school. As you can see, I am deeply invested and involved in our public school district. I am also a Christian with many friends who choose to send their children to private schools or homeschool.

I am **extremely opposed** to school vouchers in any and all forms, including disguises like "School Choice." Our nation long ago chose to fund public schools through public taxes because educating **all** children was seen as a benefit to all of society. This is still true. Public tax dollars are intended for public education, to provide education to all children by schools that are held accountable by taxpayers. Our public schools need full funding, not to have tax dollars diverted away to private institutions with no accountability. While parents certainly have the right to choose a private and religious education for their children, that is their personal choice for their personal family that they should then personally pay for—not the public taxpayers.

One of my children receives extra services at school because she is on an IEP. The special education program that is currently underfunded by \$173 million should be the budgeting priority, not diverting tax dollars to private schools. Vouchers for private schools are primarily a way for already wealthy families to further accumulate wealth, while students in need will suffer greater lacks in their educations. This is not what our state or our country should stand for.

Kansas school districts already had to implement plans to provide school choice options to families. The Olathe district thoroughly informed families about the options to request other schools than your zoned school, even for families outside of the district. If this is really about "school choice," those options already exist without pulling money away from public schools to pad the pockets of families who personally choose a different education experience for their children.

I'm asking you to vote no on bill SB 75 because it is antithetical to everything we stand for as a society that wants to educate **all** the children in our nation. Every child deserves a quality education, and that is best served by robustly funding **public school districts**.

Thank you for your time,

Tracy Baack
tracybaack@gmail.com

Senate Committee on Education
Senate Bill 75 Opposition - Written Testimony
January 28th, 2025

Tom Baker, Ph.D.
Educator / Public School Parent
Email Address: tomwbarker@gmail.com

Chair Erikson and Senate Committee on Education Members:

My name is Tom Barker and I am writing as an public school educator and parent of a public school student in opposition to Senate Bill 75 (SB 75). I have had the privilege to be a public school teacher for the past twelve years. Having completed my Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Kansas, I choose to work in the K-12 setting instead of further working in higher education. I have also had the extreme privilege to have a son who has completed nine years of a public school education. I could rave on for hours about the trials and challenges of being a public school teacher, while also noting many of the successes I have seen. Simply put - I love my job and glad that I have found my calling. I am also grateful for my son's public school education and the many opportunities it has allowed him to have.

My opposition to this bill is that I believe that it threatens and questions the integrity of public schools in Kansas and the use of public funds. First, SB 75 lacks any accountable measures to ensure that the use of taxpayers funds are indeed providing for a quality education for these students. To date, there are no studies that show that students who receive tax credit vouchers do statistically better than students in public schools. Additionally, previous studies, like those conducted some time ago by the Brookings Institute, found that students who do receive tax credits, and by enlarge vouchers, do not perform any better than those in public schools and in some instances perform worse. The fact that this legislation proposes providing a \$8,000 or \$4,000 tax credit for each student attending an accredited or non-accredited private school with public funds, while not ensuring that the use of these funds measure any particular outcomes is a misapplication of public funds.

Second, this bill provides public funds to a very small portion of Kansans. A presentation by the Kansas Legislative Research Department on the 16th of this month in this committee, noted that 92% of Kansas students attend public schools. Carl Davis' research brief for the Institute of Taxation and Economic Policy, noted that in looking at states with tax credit vouchers between 60% to 99% of all recipients had an annual income of more than \$200,000 per year. Furthermore, as noted in the previous legislative session in years past, many Kansas students do not live anywhere in proximity to a private school. With all of these points it seems as though those who would benefit most for these vouchers are those affluent families who live in the major urban areas of Kansas, and not the farm kid who rushes home after football practice to

help parents out with the cores, or the student who has to pick up their siblings from school and walk them home because their parents are still at work.

Lastly, many of us choose to utilize non-publicly funded opportunities in a variety of areas. This is a choice one makes based on what resources they have and what they feel best meets their needs. That said, this does not mean that when you opt out of using a publicly provided good you are entitled to public funds to subsidize your choice, particularly when there is not an accountability system in place. With this year's legislative session focusing on lowering taxes for Kansans, this bill with the possibility of providing up to \$125,000,000 and the prospect of an increase of 25% in future years for only a small portion of Kansans seems insulting. Combined with the fact that school teachers and parents of students in public schools, like myself, have asked for more funding to give us the resources we need is disheartening to say the least.

I hope you will vote in opposition to this bill.

Tom Barker, Ph.D.

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Nicole Bakerink, nicbake@hotmail.com

Teacher in Shawee Mission School District and Parent in Olathe School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. First of all, I have spent much of my life in Kansas public schools as a student, paraprofessional, and teacher. It is imperative that we continue to fully fund our public schools. Besides educating students, schools provide important services such as meals, before/after school care, and physical and mental health care.

Our public schools accept and educate **all** children, in contrast to private schools. Children with special needs, disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language will not benefit from these tax credits because few private schools will accommodate their needs.

Education Tax Credits take funds that could be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of only some parents. Education Tax Credits have the same negative impact as a voucher program. In addition, an "appeal" of the tax credit is supposedly providing more choices for parents; but since private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, that often leaves children behind. Vouchers like this tax credit program do not provide real choice for many families.

Kansans expect accountability for how our tax dollars are being used. Private schools and homeschools lack oversight, meaning taxpayers won't know whether our tax dollars are being spent to educate and improve the lives of children. In addition, this unfairly impacts students in rural areas as they have few private school options.

For all of these reasons, I strongly believe that public tax dollars should remain with our public schools which are accountable to taxpayers and support all Kansans. I urge you to vote no on bill SB 75.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Nicole Bakerink

Olathe, KS

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Amy Bales, amy.nichole30@gmail.com

Parent in USD #232 (De Soto, KS)

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to write to you today. I am the proud parent of children who will attend public schools in Kansas starting this fall. I am writing to voice my strong opposition to Senate Bill 75.

As someone who grew up in a very rural community, I have seen firsthand the critical role public schools play in holding our communities together. SB 75 threatens to drain the resources our public schools desperately need to continue serving all students, particularly in rural areas like the one I grew up in, where private school options simply do not exist.

This bill is especially troublesome because it includes no income cap, meaning that affluent families who already have the means to send their children to private schools would receive taxpayer-funded benefits. Many of these families may not contribute to the public education system or other public goods that benefit all Kansans, leaving families like mine to bear the brunt of these financial losses. Public schools will be left with fewer resources to educate the majority of Kansas children – children whose families rely on these schools to provide a quality education and equal opportunities.

Additionally, private schools operate without the same level of accountability or oversight as public schools. They are not required to adhere to the same rigorous standards or provide or provide the same services for students with special needs. Diverting scarce resources toward private schools that lack transparency and do not serve all students is simply not a responsible or fair use of taxpayer dollars.

Kansas families deserve a strong, well-funded public education system that serves everyone, not just a select few. SB 75 would erode the foundation of public education in our state, harm rural communities, and widen the gap between those who can afford private education and those who cannot. I urge you to stand with the majority of Kansas families who rely on public schools and vote no on SB 75.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Judi Barkema, jabarkema@gmail.com
Private Citizen

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. As a parent of two Shawnee Mission West High School graduates, I know the value public schools provide. Public schools are a key resource for success as individuals and as a state.

Public tax dollars belong with public schools

Tax dollars should be used to strengthen public schools that serve everyone instead of giving tax dollars to families making a private school choice.

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

Funneling our tax dollars to private schools that pick and choose which children to serve is a poor use of funds. Tax credits proposed in this bill do not provide real choice.

Vouchers are welfare for the wealthy

The proposed tax credits will give refunds to families and these families will not contribute funding towards public efforts (including roads) that we all use. If I don't use the library, can I get tax credits to pay for books I buy?

No oversight or accountability

Tax dollars should not go to private schools and home schools that have no oversight. With no oversight, what standard is there for a quality education?

Impact on rural areas

The proposed tax credits will drain public school resources across the state, including rural areas that have little or no private school options. This means rural areas will subsidize private school tuition for metro areas.

Please vote NO on SB 75.

Judi Barkema
Lenexa

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Ashley + Eric Barlow
Parents of children in Shawnee Mission School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I wanted to share my opposition to bill SB 75.

public schools are great schools, as my son is in 1st grade and we are prepping our daughter to attend kindergarten in one this august. my mother was also an educator for 40-plus years before she retired, so i understand the importance--and the service--of public education.

public schools are inclusive to all, not chosen participants, like private schools. this bill redirects funds that could support our public schools—serving all children—to families who have chosen private or religious education, including many who can comfortably afford it.

i am asking you to vote NO for so many reasons, but most importantly because the rich are ALREADY rich. the families who can already afford the choice to send their kids to private school will benefit greatly, while funding for public schools and other state services pay the price.

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

ashley + eric barlow

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Theodore Beauchamp – ted.beauchamp@hotmail.com
Private Citizen

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

As a Kansas resident, I write in opposition to SB 75. I believe this bill is fiscally irresponsible.

While a fiscal note is not available on this bill at the time of this writing, we can look to a similar bill from the previous session and make some basic calculations to find the impact on the state budget.

Per the fiscal note for SB 509 in the 2023-2024 session, the Department of Education reported 26,700 students enrolled in accredited private schools and estimated 54,300 students in non-accredited private schools. Since this bill does not have an income limit to claim this credit and the credit is fully refundable, it is likely that taxpayers would claim the full amount of the credit available to them.

If we conservatively assume zero growth in private school enrollment from 2022-2023 to the current school year, this tax credit would total \$430,800,000 for the 2025 tax year! Obviously, this will be limited by the initial \$125,000,000 cap, but it will easily trigger the 25% annual growth mechanism for many years to come.

Again assuming flat enrollment in private schools, this credit would cost over a billion dollars in its first five years and grow at the 25% rate each of its first seven years of existence.

Year	Tax Credit Cap
2025	\$ 125,000,000.00
2026	\$ 156,250,000.00
2027	\$ 195,312,500.00
2028	\$ 244,140,625.00
2029	\$ 305,175,781.25
5 Year Total	\$ 1,025,878,906.25

I'll refrain at this time from making assumptions as to how the proponents intend to pay for this credit, but lets call it what it is: an unfunded liability to the benefit of private organizations and a select few households that will quickly cost the state half a billion dollars a year.

Please vote no on SB 75. It is simply unaffordable for our state under any budget scenario.

Thank you,
Theodore Beauchamp
Spring Hill, KS

Opponet, written only

SB75

I am writing to express my concerns about the potential implementation of education vouchers in our community of Leawood, Kansas. While vouchers may appear to provide families with greater choice, they pose significant risks to our public schools and the overall well-being of our community.

As a parent who sent both of my children to Leawood public schools from kindergarten through 12th grade, I can attest to the exceptional education and experiences they received. My daughter, in particular, earned numerous scholarship offers from colleges across the country, thanks to the outstanding education provided by the Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD). I want other families in our community to have the same opportunities for their children that my family has been so fortunate to experience.

Education vouchers, however, threaten to undermine the quality of our public schools by diverting taxpayer funds to private institutions. Public schools are the cornerstone of our community, serving all students regardless of their background, abilities, or income. By reducing the funding available to public schools, vouchers compromise their ability to invest in resources, retain skilled teachers, and maintain the high standards that have made Leawood and SMSD a desirable place to live and raise a family.

Furthermore, private schools are not held to the same accountability standards as public schools. They are not required to follow state curriculum guidelines, administer standardized tests, or provide accommodations for students with special needs. Public dollars should not be used to fund institutions that may fail to meet the educational or ethical standards we expect in Leawood.

Our community is proud of its strong public schools, which not only provide excellent education but also contribute to the high quality of life we all enjoy. Undermining public education with vouchers risks weakening the very foundation that has allowed families like mine to thrive. Instead of redirecting funds to private institutions, we should invest in improving public schools for all students.

I urge policymakers to reconsider any proposals for education vouchers and prioritize strengthening our public education system. Our children deserve equitable access to quality education, and our community's future depends on it.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Benditt

January 25, 2025

Testimony to the Senate Education Committee

NAME: Erica Benson

TITLE: Parent of students in Shawnee Mission School District, PTA Board Member, and Blue Valley School District teacher

EMAIL ADDRESS: ericawbenson@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: SB 75 Education Opportunity Tax Credit

HEARING DATE: Jan. 28, 2025

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Distinguished Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75. I am a parent of two young students in elementary school, a PTA board member and a long-time public school teacher in both urban and suburban school districts. Education tax credits or vouchers only serve to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus have the same negative impact as vouchers. Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers.

As rural Republicans in states across the country understand, the issue isn't about school choice. Education tax credits, ESAs and vouchers are actually about transfers of wealth. If you ask people across Kansas if they support sending their tax dollars to private schools and homeschools with no accountability and no standards and put more money in the pocket of the wealthiest Kansans, they're going to tell you they're against that. Our state cannot afford two education systems and should not create two systems.

Over time there is no limit to how much the state general fund (used to fund our public schools, road and bridges, and so on) will be depleted via these refundable tax credits. Eventually every family in Kansas not sending their kids to public school could receive these tax credits. Rural families without private school options will essentially be subsidizing families in more populated areas of the state like Johnson County, Wichita, or Topeka.

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. This is tax avoidance and a tax windfall. And there is no regard for how much private education actually costs.

Every community benefits from a strong public education system, regardless of whether all families choose to use it or not. Education tax credits divert money from public education, leaving less funding for proven reforms, like smaller classes, summer school, and teacher training.

Facts to consider:

- Private schools and home schools would receive tax dollars without any public oversight. Private schools are not required to keep or release statistics on attendance, curriculum, test scores, or graduation rates, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not their tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children.
- Private schools and home schools are not subject to standardized testing, curriculum standards, or graduation requirements. Without regulation, it is possible that children are simply not learning basic academic skills or learning about the most basic democratic values of our society.
- Private schools may employ uncertified teachers. Home schools do not have to teach their children/students anything! There is abuse and neglect in many home schools. Homeschooled students are in danger of child maltreatment.
- Public services are 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.
- Education Tax Credits will further complicate the tax code.
- Families who do not make enough money to pay taxes will be unable to claim the credits, meaning the poorest families will not be able to attend high-quality private schools or have transportation to attend any option.
- Those who will most benefit from the credits are the wealthy, who are most likely to send their children to private schools.
- Public education benefits the entire community: A well-funded and effective public education system benefits everyone in the community, regardless of whether they have children in the public schools. It prepares future workers, citizens, and leaders, and helps to create a well-educated and productive workforce.
- Public education benefits the economy: Studies have shown that public education is a key driver of economic growth, as it provides the skilled workers and entrepreneurs needed to fuel economic development.
- Public education benefits property values: Property values are often higher in communities with strong public schools, which can benefit all homeowners, including those who don't have children in the public schools.
- Public education provides social benefits: A well-funded public education system can help to reduce income inequality, increase social mobility, and promote social cohesion, which benefits everyone in society.

Please oppose **Senate Bill 75**, thank you for your consideration.

Erica Benson
Overland Park, KS

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025

NAME: Patricia Ann Benson

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: pacbenson@gmail.com

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only testimony

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

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

Kansans 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. Vouchers do NOT decrease operating costs for public schools, but they do decrease the amount of money public schools have to spend.

There are many proven ways to improve public schools. Providing better resources to 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.

Public schools serve all students - private schools may reject students for many reasons.

I ask that you vote NO on SB 75.

Thank you.

Patricia Ann Benson

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Kelly Bergman ka.bergman521@gmail.com
Private Citizen

Thank you for your time and service to our great state. I am writing testimony today to voice my opposition to SB 75.

Public tax dollars belong with public schools

Public tax dollars are meant for the good of the public. Public schools help to propel our economy and protect our property values. Businesses and families look for quality public schools when relocating. Having a strong public school system benefits all Kansans, not just individual students.

Public schools are public good

Diverting tax dollars to those who choose private or home schools would undermine our state's ability to fund public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system. Rural students and their communities have the most to lose from this, even though they contribute their fair share of taxes. These areas of our state are at risk of having their public school funds drained with no other options to turn to.

Vouchers are welfare for the wealthiest Kansans

If a family can afford to send their children to private school they can afford to pay their fair share of taxes. Funding for public schools and other state services should not suffer because they have made this choice. A tax credit for alternatives to public education would only reduce tax burden on the wealthy. This would simultaneously harm the state as a whole.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. Please help to keep Kansas strong for generations to come by protecting the public schools that propel our communities. Please vote no on SB 75.

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025

Abby Beyrau

Parent in Shawnee Mission School District with 1 child in Santa Fe Trail and 1 child starting in the Fall.

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I'm glad for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill SB 75.

I am a resident of Mission, KS and my children are in the Shawnee Mission School District. I see first-hand how our public school system provides so much more than an education to countless families. I've seen kids who begin to thrive after getting an appropriate special education plan. We've had a fantastic experience with our own school therapist within Santa Fe Trail, who has an unimaginable workload within the school, but makes due with the limited resources given to her.

I attended private school my whole life, and still have many family and friends who attend private school. However, I believe that this is a choice families make and that public tax dollars should be given to public schools, to fully fund what is needed. This is for the betterment of society and thousands of families who only have the resources provided to them at school.

I am asking the committee to vote no on bill SB 75 and keep our tax dollars with public schools.

Thank you,

Abby Beyrau

Shawnee Mission School District Parent

Mission, KS

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Kristen Blackton, krosekauf@gmail.com
Parent in USD 232

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for serving in Topeka and for taking the time to read my testimony. My name is Kristen Blackton, and I am the parent of a young daughter who is currently enrolled in the De Soto School District (USD 232). I am writing today to voice my **opposition** to SB 75.

As a former educator, I am uniquely acquainted with the importance of fully-funded schools in our community. Public schools are vital to educating **all** students in our state, and their contributions go far beyond just educating the future. They are a public good that is instrumental to a successful society. Our public tax dollars should be reserved for funding our public schools.

SB 75 would provide large tax credits to Kansans who choose not to send their children to public schools. While it is every parent's right to choose whether their children will attend private or public schools, they **should not** be allowed to use public tax dollars to fund their private school decision. Unlike private institutions, our public schools educate **all** children, regardless of background and ability or disability. Many private schools are unable to take students with disabilities as they cannot or do not provide the appropriate services for them. It is unfair and unjust to divert public dollars away from our Kansas school's special education programs that are currently underfunded across the state.

Furthermore, SB 75 does not account for the lack of accountability for private schools and homeschooling operations. Because of this lack of oversight, Kansas taxpayers will have no way of knowing whether these schools that are receiving public dollars are meeting the educational and safety standards that we expect. In some cases, these schools are not even accredited.

My daughter currently attends the early childhood center in USD 232 and will be in kindergarten at one of the USD 232 elementary schools in one year. I am seeing the great good that our Kansas public schools provide firsthand. SB 75 would be detrimental to students, teachers, and schools across our great state. Please vote **NO** on bill SB 75 to keep public dollars in our public schools.

Thank you for your time.

Kristen Blackton
Shawnee, KS

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Hearing date scheduled for Jan 28 2025

Rick Blumhorst, individual Kansas taxpayer

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding Senate Bill 75

My wife and I were educated in public school systems. We moved multiple times during my military career, ultimately settling in Kansas because of the state schools' reputation for quality education. All 3 of our children attended and graduated from USD368 well prepared for their undergraduate studies at FHSU, UCM and UND. We now have grandchildren in Kansas public schools.

ALL of civil society benefits from a well-educated populace, and well-funded public schools have proven to be more than adequate to meet the requirements of military, private, industrial and professional callings. Private schools accept and reject any they choose, including those students who may struggle with subject matter or who have any manner of learning impediment such as dyslexia. Additionally, private schools have no academic accountability to the state, no financial accountability to prove solvency, no need to prove accreditation, no charter to report performance nor to adequately prepare our children for the technically demanding careers that will move Kansas industries forward.

The committee would do well to research the performance of the private school experiment in Arizona (including Title of Liberty Academy / ARCHES Academy in Mesa, AZ) in which schools have closed abruptly due to poor financial management. Students and parents have been defrauded monetarily and in loss of educational opportunity.¹

My tax dollars are to pay for PUBLIC education, and are NOT to be spent on private, prep, religious or homeschools. If parents wish to homeschool or send their children to unaccountable private schools, fine – THEY can write those checks. But they will do it without MY money.

The legislature has NO business diverting the funds that Kansas taxpayers pay to support PUBLIC education and Kansas legislators must vote NO on SB75.

Rick Blumhorst, Paola, KS

(1) <https://www.propublica.org/article/arizona-private-school-vouchers-no-transparency>

**SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 27, 2025**

Jan Bombeck janbombeck51@gmail.com

**Private citizen, parent, grandparent, public school teacher in Kansas
for 30+ years**

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 75.

Thank you for your time and service to the citizens of Kansas and the students that may be affected by the passage of this bill.

I have MANY reasons for opposing the passage of SB75 including my 30+ years as a public school teacher in Kansas. My primary reason for opposing this bill is that I **STRONGLY** feel that my tax dollars should not go to fund someone else's **choice**. If I feel the public swimming pools in my community are inferior, or I do not wish to swim at a public pool I can **choose** to build a pool in my backyard! I should **NOT** expect to have the state pay for any part of that pool. If I dislike the police department in my community I can also **choose** to hire a private protection service, again I should not expect the state to pay for my **choice**.

I also feel that public schools are invaluable in teaching children how to get along with people who may be different than they or their families are. I went to Kansas public schools K-12, as did both of my children. When my daughter was at Shawnee Mission North a friend of hers spent the summer in New York City and when I asked her what it was like being in New York she shrugged and said "It was just like being at North-lots of different people". What a great testament to our public schools—teaching our children to be citizens of the world!

Thank you again for opposing SB 75.

Sincerely, Jan Bombeck

[CLOSING – reiterate in some way that you are asking them to vote no on bill SB 75.]

**SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 27, 2025**

**Mandy Bredehoft, callmandy@gmail.com
[Private citizen in Wichita, KS 67212]**

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for your time and service to people of the great state of Kansas. As a lifelong Kansans, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75.

I have received all of my formal education in the state of Kansas, and I am currently in my 19th year of being a public school in Wichita. As the daughter and granddaughter of public-school teachers, I am a product of the public schools in Kansas. I attended Cedar Vale Public Schools for my entire childhood where I also graduated valedictorian. I received a fantastic education, and I am strongly opposed to the voucher program specifically due to the impact that it will make on the majority of schools in Kansas.

Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children. Strong public schools make for strong Kansas communities. When I think of my hometown, this voucher bill would devastate a community like Cedar Vale. There is no private school option in Cedar Vale. When resources are diverted away, the school will close, and the town will die. Rural students and communities will be harmed as public-school resources are drained to fill the pockets for the wealthy who can already afford to send their kids to a private school. It is a poor use of tax dollars to be used in this way due to the lack of oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether our tax dollars are being spent to improve the lives of children.

Every student in Kansas has the right to a free and quality education. Why would we want to take resources away from ALL our Kansas kids? A strong public education system provides benefits to all of society, not just the students who attend. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private schools undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools, potentially leaving an underfunded public school system.

In closing, these tax credits are just another way for the wealthy to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share. Kansans deserve better. Tax dollars should stay with public schools and I would strongly ask you to vote no on bill SB 75.

Thank you for your time,

Mandy Bredehoft

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Debra K Brennan

Retired public elementary educator

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

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

I spent 27 years teaching in a Title I, culturally diverse elementary public school. I cannot adequately convey the importance of public education! Public tax dollars should remain in public education where ALL children are accepted and educated. Education Tax Credits divert funds that can be used to continue to improve public education. These tax credits are nothing more than a voucher program masqueraded under a different name.

Private school attendance is a choice, a choice that should be paid for by the parents. Private schools are not available to all students. Private schools get to choose who they admit. The best and brightest are admitted while leaving others behind, especially the struggling, disabled, special needs or behavioral challenged student.

Public schools are a public service and should be paid for by everyone, regardless of whether parents CHOOSE to use them. Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share.

A strong public education system benefits the entire society! It is past time to return to this focus. I urge you to vote no on bill SB7. Thank you!

2. **Email subject line:** SB 75 Written Opposition Testimony

3. **Email Body:** Please find attached my written-only opposition testimony for SB 75.

HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT SUBMITTING TESTIMONY?

Contact the Committee Assistant, Cyndie Rexer, at 785.296.7476.

Talking Points

This does not have to be adhered to perfectly. Just some guidance for those looking for help.

1. Personalize your testimony by mentioning your connection to public schools:
 - Have kids attending now or in the past
 - Teacher, para, etc.
 - Someone who understands the value of our public schools to an educated society and to the vitality of our communities.
2. Consider including how public schools have benefited your family or community.
3. Explain why you oppose the bill and/or voucher programs in general. Below are some talking points arranged by subject matter to help you craft testimony.
 - a. Use the subject matter heading as parts of your testimony
 - b. Include some of the bullet points that resonate with you
 - c. Try putting them into your own words or into paragraph form
4. Consider pointing out (or asking) that the legislature invest in our public schools by fully funding special education instead of diverting our tax dollars to non-public schools.

Public tax dollars belong with public schools:

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

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Jessica Bright, Jessica.lauran28@gmail.com

Parent in Olathe School District - USD 233

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for your service and taking the time to read the public's testimony. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75.

As a lifelong Kansan, I chose to stay in Kansas to raise my own family in large part due to our outstanding public schools.

I had the privilege to receive an excellent education through the Blue Valley School District, and am now watching my seven-year-old thrive in the Olathe School District. Everyone who lives in the Kansas City metro area knows that Kansas schools are far and away the best in the area. They are the reason our property values are consistently higher and homes in the area are more sought after.

SB 75 jeopardizes this stellar reputation. By diverting general fund dollars to private schools, we would be robbing not only our public schools, which 90% of Kansas children attend, but also our roads and highways (which are again, a benchmark of excellence in the area).

We have the benefit of hindsight with this bill. Multiple states have implemented similar bills and have seen not only their public education funding suffer, but they have also not reported growth in private education enrollment. This means these tax refunds are not being used to enroll additional children in private schools, they are simply providing a tax break for people wealthy enough to already be enrolled in these schools.

I am asking you to vote no on bill SB 75 so that Kansas schools so that Kansas schools continue to excel.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Jessica Bright

Olathe

SB75 Opponent
Written Only

Hello. I am writing today as a lifelong lover of education, a late-in-life graduate degree-holding special educator, and a mother of two whose passion lies in ensuring equity in education. School choice is a misnomer presented as a gift to all. I ask you to please consider the inequities that will absolutely befall YOUR constituents' children and the ultimate irreparable damage to our public education system, not to mention contributing to an already dismal tax status if SB75 passes.

DISCRIMINATION: Vouchers are useless to a family who is unable to transport and who is unable to make up the difference in tuition costs. The reality is that the districts who, on paper, could benefit from such a "gift" are actually the ones whose residents would not be able to benefit.

CONTINUED CLASS SEPARATION: Vouchers will (and have, as has been demonstrated in other states that have failed in implementing them) provide families who can afford private school to receive, in essence, a discount. These are families who have already made the decision to part from public school, who have made the decision to send their children to schools that can choose who attends and who does not, who have chosen to separate their children from a general populace that promises richness in diversity.

MORE DISCRIMINATION: As has been demonstrated in other states that have attempted this practice, students with disabilities lose all protections provided by IDEA. This harkens back to a time when children were sent to institutions and forgotten if they had differences that educators didn't know how to educate.

LESS ACCOUNTABILITY: As has been demonstrated in every private school, educators are not held to the same standards that public school educators are. The lower standards here shout hypocrisy: we want the best for our students (at least I hope you do), and yet, we will continue to expect less of those educating them.

I love my job. It is by far the most difficult one I have ever had, and yet, every day, I have the opportunity to teach others how to be more accepting of those with disabilities. These lessons extend far beyond the classroom when we see our students caring for those who have less, for those who look different than they do. This job is made possible because the public schools have resources (albeit continuously dwindling). Continuing to gut a system that has the responsibility to educate YOUR future - to prepare your caretakers when you are unable to care for yourself, to plant seeds of exploration for those who will research protocol for your cancer treatment, to ensure we have adults capable of ensuring our economy does not fall into the depths of a depression that will cause you to lose things you hold dear promises a society that will continue to descend into one unable to progress.

Please, for the love of all that is right and just, be responsible to the majority of your tax-paying constituents. Focus your efforts on better equipping the schools that are already doing the work and doing it with far less than they should have to.

Respectfully,
Monica Brown
special education teacher and constituent

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28th, 2025
Dawn Brumbley, dawnraeann@gmail.com
Parent in the Olathe District Schools

Dear Chair & members of committee,

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

It appears that several years running now, I'm here submitting testimony in defense of our public schools because year after year, a new bill appears to attempt to defund our public education once again, which will only harm our children and future Kansans. This bill provides yet another opportunity for the wealthiest of Kansas to take advantage of a tax loophole and to take directly from our already underfunded public schools. The vast majority of Kansas children attend public schools, and this would harm and impact nearly all of our children. Private schools don't have to accept children like my nonverbal autistic child, and there isn't a private school that I have spoken to in Johnson County that would accept and educate my child. Even if he was in therapy all day every day, the therapies he now gets through the public school (OT, Speech, PT), the credits that are proposed in this bill wouldn't even scratch the surface of the cost of those services at a private institution. Not to mention that most private insurance (including mine) don't cover the cost of those services even when they are medically necessary for your child. Public schools provide these services to children like mine because they are absolutely necessary for these children to succeed, and no private institution is required to provide them. Our disabled children deserve the same access as anyone else. This bill would easily end up costing tax payers millions of dollars in refunds without any real oversight, as there is no requirement to prove accredited institutions or even to prove how much tuition is being paid (in the instances where the student does attend an accredited institution) meaning they could get back the highest refund and directly take money from the State of Kansas and public education. Instead of providing these tax credits, the legislature should be using these tax dollars to fully fund Special Education, which is still currently underfunded at \$173 MILLION dollars.

I also find it extremely disheartening and disturbing that a bill like this is introduced on a Friday and then has a hearing on a Tuesday, giving almost no time for the public to weigh in on this bill, or to even know what is happening in the legislature with their public dollars and their public schools. To do this in this manner is just simply harmful to Kansans who deserve to know and could weigh in on their public schools. Kansan children deserve a good, solid public education and this bill only works against that by taking public school funding and funneling it to institutions that don't service the vast majority of our children.

Vote NO and oppose SB 75, and keep public dollars in our public schools where ALL children are accepted and educated.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dawn Brumbley

Olathe District parent

Olathe, KS

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Victoria Bruner, vicker221@gmail.com

Early Childhood Special Education Teacher, USD 305 Salina Public Schools, retired

Parent and grandparent of children who attended both public and private schools

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for reading this letter. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75.

As an introduction, I am a retired public school employee. I have taught in rural schools and in Salina. I personally have seen the importance of public education in our society. My husband and I also saw the value of putting our children, for a few years, in a private school, transferring to a public school when we moved. We were not rich people. When our (4) children attended private school tuition was difficult but it was our **CHOICE**, as it is the choice of any parent whose children attend a private school. Part of making the **CHOICE** of enrolling our children in private school is accepting the consequence of paying tuition. If it's important to you, you budget for it.

When we moved, my children attended public school. I became a public school teacher. My daughter and son-in-law are public school teachers. My school aged grandchildren currently attend public schools. Public schools are vital to our society and they need the funds that are provided by PUBLIC taxes. Fully investing in our public schools is necessary. I was also a Special Education Teacher. Special Education has yet to be fully funded by the state. Why take away dollars that you say you don't have?

Public schools are available to everyone. Private schools are not. Private schools have a choice to not accept a child, for example one with a disability. They do not have to follow the same guidelines or accountabilities as a public school. Kansans deserve to have a school who uses taxpayer money to be accountable for the education provided.

I am opposed to this bill SB 75. There are more negatives than positives and ultimately it will not benefit ALL Kansas students. Tomorrow, January 29, is Kansas Day. Most Kansas elementary students will be celebrating the 164th birthday of Kansas. Please show that you value their education by voting "no" on SB 75.

Thank you for your time.

January 28, 2025

Testimony to the Senate Education Committee

Kellie Bubeck

Kellie.bubeck@gmail.com

Parent in the Shawnee Mission School District

SB 75

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

Dear Chair & Members of the Committee:

I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 75. I was born and raised in Olathe, Kansas, and am fortunate to have attended Olathe public schools for my entire education. The quality education I received in Kansas public schools provided the foundation for my life, including my pursuit of higher education.

I am now an attorney and mother of three children, all of whom will attend Kansas public schools. I request that you please vote no on SB 75 because it will hurt public education and reduce the opportunities for other children in the state to receive a quality public education.

SB 75 will divert public tax dollars to private schools at a time when legislators should be focused on the \$173 million shortfall in special education funding. The state should fully fund special education, not private schools. Using public taxpayer dollars for private schools drains the public schools of needed resources for successful student learning.

Public tax dollars are for the public good. It is no coincidence that many young couples who live in Kansas City, Missouri move to Kansas once they start having children because of the high-quality public schools.

We also need to consider the long-term implications of this bill. If we are not funding our public schools appropriately, we will have a generation of less-educated citizens, which affects us all.

In addition, this bill will disproportionately affect rural students as there are few options for private schools outside of the Kansas City metropolitan area. Private schools pick and choose who they accept. Public schools accept all students.

Quality public schools benefit more than just families with children. They increase our property values. Without quality public schools, fewer individuals will be inclined to move to Kansas, which will ultimately result in a smaller tax base for the state.

Furthermore, SB 75 lacks oversight and provides no review process to evaluate how students are utilizing our taxpayer dollars at private or home schools. Taxpayer dollars should require the same oversight and transparency as our public schools. Continued research demonstrates that private school vouchers do not improve student achievement.

I respectfully request that you vote no on SB 75. This bill will negatively impact not only students, but all Kansans.

Sincerely,

Kellie Bubeck
Kellie.bubeck@gmail.com

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

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

I wish to share my opposition to bill SB75. I currently have 3 children in Shawnee Mission Elementary Schools with a fourth who will attend in the future. Kansas does not need school vouchers. We should be investing more in our schools to provide the resources our kids and staff need.

My three oldest have all had IEPs since before they ever started kindergarten. My oldest son has received occupational therapy at our neighborhood school since he was 4 years old. My middle children are twins who received speech services from Johnson County Infant Toddler Services since before age 2 and had IEPs for speech therapy since they turned 3. They were fortunate enough to get into the district pre-k program as 3-year-olds and had a fantastic year of benchmark gains. They are in the program again this year as 4/5yo's and flourishing. We absolutely know they will be kindergarten ready for our neighborhood school and the IEP transition plan is beginning to form. The school provided services are in addition to the thousands of dollars our household, and our insurance provider, spend on private speech and occupational therapy every year. 20-30 years ago, my children would have been written off and likely struggled immensely to ever participate in school with low prospects on being contributing members to society. If you care about children, our state, the future, our economy, our education, our competition in a global landscape, please create more funding opportunities for public education instead of ultimately taking away from it. Private and home schools would not be able to meet the needs of my children. Dollars taken away from school buildings hurt the children and teachers there. I grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, in the 80s and 90s, when there was constant churn of school models and funding and none of them proved to be any kind of success story. I support the separation of church and state and believe in tax dollars do not have a place funding any kind of religious based education or religious objection to public schools. The world does not operate in silos. The sooner everyone starts growing and learning together, the better. Keep funding our public schools. I do support the newer transfer option to attend schools outside your neighborhood/district/county. I think we should give that more time to take effect and increase awareness of that option for families seeking more educational options. Lastly, as someone who lives close to State Line Road, I do not support this new bill since it could reward people who put their children in Missouri private schools. Please vote no on SB75.

Thank you for your consideration,
Margaret Bucci

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025

Audrey Burks
Olathe School District Parent, former Shawnee Mission School District Teacher

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

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

As someone who spent the past 19 years in a public school classroom and a mother to a student in the public schools, I have witnessed firsthand the importance and value of strong public schools. Decisions around schools cannot be made based on what makes the adults benefit financially or otherwise. Decisions **MUST** be made on the outcomes they have for students.

In my classroom, I had strong student outcomes because I believe in the capability of every child to learn. Every child who walked through my classroom door was safe, valued, and educable. There is plenty of data to show that, as a result, my students had strong outcomes in reading, math, language. I stand to argue there was additional growth in less-easily-measured values like social skills and character. Every child in Kansas deserves nothing less.

Please don't just take my small data and anecdotal evidence into consideration. Look at the scientific data in the research by Joshua Cowen, Mark Dynarski, Nin Rui, Ann Webber, Babette Gutmann, Meredith Bachman, R. Joseph Waddington, Mark Berends, Atila Abdulkadiroglu, Parag A. Pathak, Christopher R. Walter, David Figlio, Krzysztof Karbownik, and others. Look at the outcomes of the voucher experiments in Louisiana, Ohio, Arizona, Missouri, or Wisconsin. The research is conclusive. Vouchers do not support positive outcomes for students.

Public schools benefit an entire community. You do not need to be a parent to feel the value of strong public schools. We all benefit from having an educated populace.

Please vote no on bill SB 75. Our students deserve better.

Thank you,
Audrey Burks

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Joan Caldwell, 1329 S. Geuda Springs Rd.

Parent of two Arkansas City High School grads. Mentor of a High School student through the Big Brother Big Sister program.

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I oppose SB 75, because if you make it easy for a select few to go to private schools, that deprives public schools of a whole group of involved parents, not to mention the money the public schools are not getting because it is going to private schools.

The public schools also have to deal with a mix of abilities, while the private schools don't.

Please vote no on SB 75.

Thank you.

Joan Caldwell

Private citizen

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Christie Carter
Parent of a child in the 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 a child that is a recent addition to the Shawnee Mission School District. We had previously private schooled my child from preschool through middle school.

As a parent well versed in the world of private education, I know that it is in the best interest of all students for public dollars to remain public. The majority of private school families can afford to send their children to private school without the tax credits. Additionally, it's imperative to all families in Kansas for children to get a wonderful education, public or private. Moving dollars away from public schools is not the answer to that.

These tax credits leave behind so many students including: special needs, disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language. They will not benefit from these tax credits as few private schools can accommodate their needs.

In closing,

I ask you to keep public schools in Kansas strong and vote no on bill SB 75

Christie Carter

Dylan Carter
Written Opposition

Hello. I am writing today as a lifelong lover of education, a late-in-life graduate degree-holding special educator, and a mother of two whose passion lies in ensuring equity in education. School choice is a misnomer presented as a gift to all. I ask you to please consider the inequities that will absolutely befall YOUR constituents' children and the ultimate irreparable damage to our public education system, not to mention contributing to an already dismal tax status if SB75 passes.

DISCRIMINATION: Vouchers are useless to a family who is unable to transport and who is unable to make up the difference in tuition costs. The reality is that the districts who, on paper, could benefit from such a "gift" are actually the ones whose residents would not be able to benefit.

CONTINUED CLASS SEPARATION: Vouchers will (and have, as has been demonstrated in other states that have failed in implementing them) provide families who can afford private school to receive, in essence, a discount. These are families who have already made the decision to part from public school, who have made the decision to send their children to schools that can choose who attends and who does not, who have chosen to separate their children from a general populace that promises richness in diversity.

MORE DISCRIMINATION: As has been demonstrated in other states that have attempted this practice, students with disabilities lose all protections provided by IDEA. This harkens back to a time when children were sent to institutions and forgotten if they had differences that educators didn't know how to educate.

LESS ACCOUNTABILITY: As has been demonstrated in every private school, educators are not held to the same standards that public school educators are. The lower standards here shout hypocrisy: we want the best for our students (at least I hope you do), and yet, we will continue to expect less of those educating them.

I love my job. It is by far the most difficult one I have ever had, and yet, every day, I have the opportunity to teach others how to be more accepting of those with disabilities. These lessons extend far beyond the classroom when we see our students caring for those who have less, for those who look different than they do. This job is made possible because the public schools have resources (albeit continuously dwindling). Continuing to gut a system that has the responsibility to educate YOUR future - to prepare your caretakers when you are unable to care for yourself, to plant seeds of exploration for those who will research protocol for your cancer treatment, to ensure we have adults capable of ensuring our economy does not fall into the depths of a depression that will cause you to lose things you hold dear promises a society that will continue to descend into one unable to progress.

Please, for the love of all that is right and just, be responsible to the majority of your tax-paying constituents. Focus your efforts on better equipping the schools that are already doing the work and doing it with far less than they should have to.

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am asking you to please vote NO on SB-75. Public schools are such a vital part of our country, state, and an especially important part of what makes Johnson County such a desirable place to live. Families have a choice when it comes to their children's education, but that does not mean that public funds should be used to support every one of these options. Our public schools are great. They could be excellent if they were fully funded by the state and federal government. These public schools serve ALL children - even the private and homeschooled students who don't have access to special services elsewhere, and this hurts everyone.

It would be a huge disservice to ALL children and families in Kansas if our public school system is weakened by the legislators elected to do what is best. This is not best.

Please stand up for Kansas kids and vote NO on SB 75.

Sincerely,
Jill Chalfie
Shawnee, KS

Opposition Testimony for SB 75

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Randy Childers rrrandy@gmail.com

Parent of child receiving special education services in Shawnee Mission School

District Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Hello, and thank you for reading my testimony. My daughter, who has significant support needs, is enrolled in the Shawnee Mission School District. This bill would divert tax money to private schools that have no obligation to serve disabled students. The fact is, the vast majority of private schools are not at all equipped to serve students with significant support needs, and they **will** refuse admission to those students.

These private schools are not an option for us. Even if she were somehow able to buck the trend and get accepted to one, most of them are Catholic schools. Our daughter is in an extremely vulnerable group – a young woman with a disability – and the odds of her being sexually assaulted in her lifetime are terrifyingly high, upwards of 80%. The Catholic church is not a safe place for a vulnerable child to be in school. A 2023 report from the KBI identified 188 members of the Catholic clergy in Kansas which are “suspected of committing various criminal acts,” including aggravated criminal sodomy, rape, aggravated indecent liberties with a child and aggravated sexual battery. She couldn’t reliably report this and advocate for herself; there’s no way we’d voluntarily put her in that situation.

As for homeschooling, like many special needs parents, we are not equipped to meet her educational needs at home. Nor can we meet her social needs. Our daughter absolutely loves going to school every day. She loves being in a busy lunchroom hanging out with her wonderful friends. She loves singing in choir with her peers. Every time we attend a choir concert, we are thrilled to see how much love and support she receives from her wonderful peers. We cannot recreate this situation at home; the year lost to COVID illustrated that with absolute clarity.

Thank you for your time and attention–

Randy Childers

Dear Chair Erickson and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to SB75.

I am a parent of students in Shawnee Mission School District at Brookwood Elementary. Our public education tax monies need to stay with public education. Kansans have always had the choice to send their kids to public, private, or homeschool. I believe the funding from the public should stay in public services.

Thank you.

Annie Clark

Kansas Citizen

Shawnee Mission and Brookwood Parent

SB 75 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Mary Coffman maryo.coffman@icloud.com
Private Citizen

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Date: January 27, 2025

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 75. I write to express my strong opposition to this proposed legislation, which I believe would severely undermine the public education system in Kansas.

As a retired executive who doesn't have children, I've always been proud to support public schools. I firmly believe that tax dollars should be used to fund public education.

SB 75 would divert critical public tax dollars away from public schools and allocate them to private institutions that lack oversight, accountability, and equitable admissions practices. These tax credits disproportionately benefit wealthier families who already have the means to afford private education while draining essential resources from public schools that serve the majority of Kansas students, including those most in need.

Key Concerns:

1. Harm to Public Education:

Kansas public schools rely on consistent funding to provide quality education, hire and retain excellent teachers, and maintain infrastructure. Diverting funds to private schools through vouchers would weaken our public schools, leaving vulnerable students with fewer opportunities.

2. Tax Inequity:

The proposed \$8,000 tax credit would create a significant tax windfall for families opting out of public schools. A family with three children could claim \$24,000 in credits far exceeding typical private school tuition costs. This unfairly uses public dollars to subsidize private education for a small percentage of families, creating an unnecessary financial burden on all taxpayers.

3. Lack of Oversight and Discrimination:

Private schools receiving voucher funds are not held to the same accountability standards as public schools. They are free to deny admission based on factors such as religion, academic performance, or behavior. Public dollars should not support institutions that do not uphold inclusive and equitable access for all students.

4. Long-Term Community Impact:

Redirecting resources to private institutions erodes the collective investment in public education, a cornerstone of our democracy. Strong public schools benefit all Kansans, creating an educated workforce and vibrant communities. Public dollars belong in public schools, not in unregulated private institutions.

Conclusion:

SB 75 is not a solution to the challenges facing Kansas education. Instead, it would exacerbate inequities, harm public schools, and misuse taxpayer dollars. I urge you to reject this bill and focus on strengthening public education, which serves every child, regardless of background or income level.

Thank you for your consideration. I respectfully request that my testimony be added to the record in opposition to SB 75.

Sincerely,

Mary Coffma

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Rebecca Cohenour, spudgirl80@gmail.com

Johnson County resident and parent/grandparent of children in and who graduated from Shawnee Mission USD 512

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this issue. I am writing to voice my **opposition** to bill SB 75.

A well-educated public is essential for a successful society. Vouchers take money from public schools and society will suffer as a result.

Following are just a few of the troubling points in this bill (there are many more):

- There is no guarantee that all schools/entities which receive voucher funding provide a solid education for students. Where is the accountability to the taxpayer?
- Private schools clearly benefit from public dollars but can discriminate in their admission policies.
- Rural areas and families without private school options will pretty much be subsidizing families in more densely populated areas of the state. Their public schools suffer from reduced funding.
- No requirement to attend a school in Kansas.
- No need to show how much is being paid in tuition; the tax credit a parent receives could be higher than the tuition paid, resulting in a tax windfall.
 - Further, if one is a parishioner of a church with a religious school, their tuition can be reduced or “free”. So, the dollars they receive from the state are my tax dollars – I am now INVOLUNTARILY tithing to their church.

In closing, I urge you to reject SB 75. Public dollars belong in public schools that are accountable to taxpayers. Society as a whole will benefit.

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 75
Senate Education Committee
January 28, 2025
Holly Coleman
concerned citizen, tax payer, and SMSD parent, volunteer, and substitute teacher

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to share my strong opposition to bill SB 75.

I attended Kansas public schools. My mother is a retired Kansas public school teacher. My own children now attend Kansas public schools where I regularly volunteer as well as work as a substitute teacher. My friends and neighbors, all of the families living in my community and across the state, all deserve and have a right to a properly funded, strong public school system. This voucher bill does not support that and will instead damage a critical state resource.

Kansas public schools are full of amazing students and staff, but the state is always looking for a way to fail them. My oldest is gifted and his needs have been met because we are lucky enough to live in a wealthier, well-populated area. What about all of the talented kids across the state? Kids want to succeed. Teachers care deeply and want to help kids succeed. But because our state legislature is always looking to undercut the public school system, not all students have access to the resources they need. Staffs and resources are stretched to the breaking point. We should be adding funds to the Kansas public school system, not siphoning it off to send to private or religious schools who have no accountability or oversight or giving it to families who do not have any financial need. Give our public schools money to hire additional staff. Give them the money they need to provide adequate, even additional, learning material and resources. Give them the money they need for proper special education. Give them money for PE, playground equipment, musical instruments, art and industrial art classes, computers, and all of the things that help a child find their strength and build a future on it.

As a tax payer, this bill offends me. First of all, most of Kansas doesn't have "choice". There is one public school, home school, or no school. Our Kansas children should be building a strong foundation for their future and the future of our state. That is the literal purpose of the public school system. Kansas public schools are more than capable of handling the responsibility when they are funded. Furthermore, families who can already afford "choice" can qualify for these vouchers. On the flip side, this is often not even enough money to actually pay for a private education if someone cannot otherwise afford it. It is misleading. Again, as a tax payer, I do not approve of either situation and find both to be repugnant. My last complaint as a tax payer is that my money would go to "institutions", whether private business or religious, that do not have to meet any standards, let alone public school standards, nor do they have oversight.

If Kansas is to grow our children into successful, capable adults who want to stay in Kansas and contribute to the economy and community, we cannot allow these vouchers. They take public tax dollars that should be serving the greater good and building a stronger future for our state, and they funnel money to people and places who have no claim to nor need of those tax dollars. And, even if an argument could be made, there are no checks and balances in place to ensure the money is going to those with a true financial need, is going to accredited institutions, or is being used for proper education standards.

With a high school and elementary aged child in the Kansas public school system, as a member of the community, as a taxpayer, I have a direct stake in this fight. Not only does this bill take money and resources away from our public school system, but it has zero checks and balances in place to even ensure appropriate disbursement or usage. I strongly oppose SB 75 and urge everyone to vote NO. If you care about the future of Kansas, you should care about keeping every penny possible in its public education system. Otherwise, you are directly contributing to the decline of the state you were elected to serve.

1/27/2025

Senate Education Committee

Re: SB 75 Opposition

Committee Members, I am submitting opposition to SB 75. The bill as presented provides a \$8,000 tax credit voucher to parents that send kids to private schools and \$4,000 credit voucher to parents that send their kids to non-accredited home school. The initial cost of the voucher presented at \$125,000 per year with up to 25% increase annually will cost over \$1,000,000 in 5 years.

The expense of SB 75 will divert funds from Public Education that serves all kids. Public Education serves all students and students with special needs. Diverting funds from Public Education negatively impacts Rural Communities. Rural communities thrive with successful Public Schools.

State statute requires special education funding to cover 92% of excess costs for districts, funding for excess cost has not been provided to adequately cover excess cost and local districts are using general funds to make up the shortfall.

Public Education ensures all students can succeed. All schools, programs, and activities supported by public funds must serve all children on the same basis as public schools. Vouchers, tax credits, and education savings account have no accountability to ensure student success. SB75 has no accountability for student success, requires no background checks, no oversight from KSDE or any other organization, and has no accountability to report student abuse or neglect.

I oppose SB 75.

Kevin Cole



USD 506 Board of Education, Sek Interlocal 637, 2025 KASB President

24052 Jackson Road

Parsons, Kansas 67357

kecole86@gmail.com

620-605-8730

TO: Sen. Renee Erickson, Chair
Senate Committee on Education
RE: SB 75 – Written Only Testimony - Opponent
FR: Connie Brown Collins
Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County
DT: Jan. 28, 2025

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee:

I'd like to thank the committee for providing this opportunity to share my thoughts on SB 75. My name is Connie Brown Collins, Founder/Executive Director of Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County. I live in Wyandotte County, Kansas City, Kansas. Our organization hosts regular informational and educational meetings and events on voting and human rights, and other pertinent issues in collaboration with numerous participating organizations and committed individuals, both from Wyandotte and Johnson Counties.

I write in opposition to SB 75 because it ignores the function of public education funding, which is to provide a quality education to all students, regardless of income level, disability and special needs status. This bill pays people to put their children in private accredited or unaccredited schools (including home schools), at a rate of \$8,000 or \$4,000 per year, respectively.

As you may know, Wyandotte County is a majority minority county, the most diverse in Kansas and said to be the second most diverse in the U.S. Many of our students are considered at-risk, and also qualify for free and reduced-price meals. That number is not only increasing in Wyandotte, but across the state. A 2023 report by the Kansas Association of School Boards found that Kansas public school students eligible for free and reduced-price meals increased from less than one-third to nearly one-half; in private schools, from one-tenth to one-fifth. Further, the number of students with disabilities in public schools more than doubled, and went from 2% to 5% in private schools. Since public schools are mandated to provide special education services to private school students, the funds needed for their services is critical. This bill could redirect funds for these services, which are currently underfunded.

Public education is a commitment and a civic responsibility shared by the everyone in Kansas.

Public education is considered a fundamental right for all students. Public schools are required to accept every child whether they struggle with learning or easily succeed, whether they have special needs or are gifted, whether they come from traumatic environments or not. As a state, we need the contributions of all citizens to fund a public education system that accepts all children.

School Choice

We all pay state taxes which fund our public schools – again, schools which serve any child in the state. Parents are free to choose private or other means of providing their

children's education, but they are not entitled to forgo their responsibility for funding public education. Further, they are not entitled to what constitutes a cash payment for opting out.

Costs for funding SB 75 are unstated, but will likely be significant. Given the current push for taxpayer funding of nonpublic schools, state funding for our public schools is tentative at best. This bill would provide state subsidies for private and home schools. It would decrease the State General Fund and add a new expenditure to the budget since the state would be subsidizing students who have never been funded before, while still funding public education.

In addition, if the amount of the tax credit allowed exceeds the taxpayer's income tax liability, the excess amount will be refunded to the taxpayer. This could allow a taxpayer which claims tax credits for several children, to receive funds for which there is no accountability for covering the school-related expenses, even if the children are enrolled in private school.

Private Schools and Performance

Finally, studies have found that students in Louisiana, Indiana and Ohio who attended private schools using vouchers actually performed worse than their similar peers in public schools. These effects persisted over several years and were not able to be attributed to students' transition to a new school.

In conclusion, I urge you to vote against SB 75 in order to ensure that all Kansas students, no matter their circumstances, get the quality public education that they need and deserve. Thank you again for providing this opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Brown Collins

Connie Brown Collins
Founder/Executive Director
Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee January 28, 2025

Valerie Creswell MD Valcreswell@gmail.com Private citizen, parent

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for your time and dedication to improve the lives of all Kansans. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 75.

I grew up in Emporia and attended public schools. We were poor and we did not have the means to pay for private schools. We could barely afford public schools. I was fortunate in receiving a solid education which allowed me to obtain a full ride scholarship to the University of Kansas and I was able to attend medical school as well.

Public tax dollars belong in public schools which accept all children. Special education has been underfunded by over \$173 million. We should direct our money towards fully funding special education.

Public schools provide protections under Title VI, Title IX, Americans with Disabilities Act etc. Private schools do not.

Vouchers reduce state revenues by allowing families to funnel money to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve. It is a way that wealthy families who can already afford private schools can avoid paying their fair share by needlessly reducing their tax burden.

These private schools discriminate against families with children with special needs, disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language who will not benefit from these tax credits as few private schools can or will meet their needs.

In rural Kansas, there are no options for private schools- why would vouchers be of any benefit for those communities who rely on public education and deserve the same opportunities as those who live in larger communities?

We need to direct our tax dollars to build up and improve our public schools. Our children are our future, and they all deserve a good education. Public schools can and should do that. I

Please vote no on bill SB 75.

Valerie Creswell

SB 75 Opposition Testimony

Senate Education Committee

January 28, 2025

Colleen Cunningham, colleen@demod.com

Parent in Blue Valley School District

Chair Erickson and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 75. I am writing today as a parent of 3 students in the Blue Valley School District, a former Special Education teacher, a formerly home-schooled student, and as a Kansas voter. I am asking you to vote NO on SB 75.

I oppose this bill for a number of reasons:

- As a parent of elementary and middle school children, and as a homeowner, I believe we should be doing all we can to strengthen Kansas' neighborhood public schools. Going back to the 1830s, American leaders like Horace Mann recognized that investing in public education would benefit entire communities by creating literate, moral and productive citizens.
- As a tax payer, I don't believe it is appropriate for taxpayer dollars to be used toward alternatives to public schools, particularly those with religious mandates. Doing so blurs the line that separates church and state.
- In my PhD program in Educational Policy and Leadership Studies, we learned that our public schools are often the hub of communities, particularly in rural areas, and I have seen this in my own experiences. When schools don't have sufficient funding to stay open, that closure has an adverse impact on the economic health and vibrancy of communities. This bill would exacerbate that effect by leaving all communities with public schools which are further underfunded, therefore able to support fewer employees, leading to more crowded classes, and lowering property values in the process.
- As a former special education teacher, I often had to choose between spending my own salary on purchasing items my students needed for their learning, or watching them go without. Instead of taking taxpayer dollars and diverting them to pay for alternatives to public schools, which are not required to provide special education students with the same legal protections as public schools, I believe your committee should be laser-focused on providing full funding for special education, particularly while we have a budget surplus.
- As a former home school student, I have empathy for families who choose that route because their public school isn't working for them, and they have additional expenses

as a result. That mirrors my own experience, and it was a challenge for my low-income family to make it work. But let's be clear: that is a choice that family is making. I should not be expected to subsidize their choice, particularly when we can see that similar legislation in other states has led to reported widespread misuse of funds, and there is no required oversight to ensure that our tax dollars are used to successfully achieve measurable educational outcomes, as public schools are required to do.

I continue to be flummoxed as to why your committee is working so diligently to divert taxpayer dollars to pay for educational alternatives that lack educational oversight, don't provide legal protections for students with disabilities, and which will serve to exacerbate existing shortcomings in our public education system. For these reasons, I oppose SB 75.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Colleen Cunningham

Overland Park