February 5, 2025
Testimony to the Senate Education Committee

NAME: **Leslie D. Mark**

TITLE: **Kansas Citizen / Voter**

BILL NUMBER: **SB 87, *Expanding student eligibility under the tax credit for low income students scholarship program, increasing the amount of the tax credit for contributions made pursuant to such program and providing for aggregate tax credit limit increases under certain conditions.***

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: **Opponent**

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: **Written Only**

Dear Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

I must ask, since you brought forth SB 87, Chair Erickson, "What exactly is your vision for a future Kansas?"

SB 87 reveals less a commitment to educational "freedom" and more an interest in shifting public resources into private hands. This bill attacks Kansas's historic, high quality public education system while likely destabilizing state finances. Irrespective the arguments you'll utter in committee or on the floor, what is plainly visible is this:

1. *A Two-Tiered Education System*
    - Public schools, already underfunded, will face further budget cuts;
    - Tax dollars will be diverted to private and religious schools, with no oversight;
    - Wealthy families will benefit from vouchers;
    - Rural and working-class families (with fewer/no private school options) will be left in declining public schools.
2. *Corporate Tax Breaks at the Expense of Public Services*
    - SB 87's tax avoidance scheme, all tied with a bow to vouchers, will disproportionately benefit corporations and the wealthiest Kansans;
    - This shift in the tax burden will fall on the middle-class;
    - The attendant budget shortfall will force cuts to SGF — from which we allocate public safety, roads, healthcare, and a whole host of essential services on which Kansans rely.
3. *A Weakening of Public Oversight & Accountability*
    - The ALEC strategy is easy to spot: minimize public oversight and allow private institutions to operate with the public's taxes;
    - Not to go too far afield from education, but this would set precedent for similar privatization in Medicaid, transportation, and other public services — part of a larger battle plan.

4. *A Decimation of Rural Communities*

- Rural districts largely do not have private schools to absorb students;
- Many public schools will be forced to merge and all will deteriorate without enough funding;
- Without strong schools, businesses and families will accelerate their departure from rural Kansas.

5. *A Kansas that Serves the Few, Not the Many*

- The ultimate outcome? A state that prioritizes wealth and corporate influence over fair opportunities for all Kansans;
- Absent investment in strong public education, infrastructure, and a sustainable, equitable economy, SB 87 advances a short-term political win at the expense of generations' future suffering.

A new year. The same tired, irresponsible vision for Kansas. VOTE NO on SB 87.

Leslie D. Mark
Mission Hills, HD 25 / Sen 7

Jamie Mast
Parent
jamiekmast@gmail.com
Bill SB 87
Opponent
WRITTEN ONLY
February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. I appreciate your time and willingness to learn about my opposition to bill SB 87 and hope that my perspective will be helpful in considering what happens with this bill.

I am so proud to have been born and raised in Belleville, KS and educated in public school in that rural setting. I still care fiercely for that community, as well as rural Kansas communities in general, even though I now live in Shawnee. For this reason, I strongly oppose bill SB 87 because passing this bill would take money and opportunities from the rural communities that make up most of Kansas and redistribute to people who have access to many more opportunities as it is.

Though my four sons, who attend USD 232 De Soto, have plenty of public and private school options available to them in Shawnee, my niece and nephew, who attend USD 109 Republic County, do not. By implementing SB 87, money and resources would be redistributed to the settings that have private schools available, mainly urban settings, leaving those without these options to pay for it.

More succinctly, my primary concerns with bill SB 87 are:

- 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 anyway.
- 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.
- There are no controls in place to ensure those receiving these tax credits are providing the children with a quality education or any education at all. Kansans expect accountability for how our tax dollars are being used.
- Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.

In closing, as written, SB 87 is not fair to all Kansans, and has few safeguards to prevent fraud. Our rural communities desperately need their public schools to survive and thrive, and SB 87 will very likely have the exact opposite impact on these communities.

Please vote NO on bill SB 87.

Jamie Mast

Parent

Shawnee, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Brittany McLaughlin
TITLE: parent, Kansas Citizen, bank employee
EMAIL ADDRESS: Brittany.b.McLaughlin@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only testimony
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Dear members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

I attended public school and have kids attending now. I also am someone who understands the value of our public schools to an educated society and to the vitality of our communities. Public schools allow all kids to have access to quality education. They also provide them with experiences culturally and demographically what a private school doesn't allow due to their standards. Kids need access to diversity and to learn to work with all kinds of abilities, beliefs and opinions.

I oppose this bill because public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that provide oversight for our tax dollars. We should not be expanding this program that already diverts tax payer dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions. Our tax dollars should not go to private schools 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.

Also, rural students (and communities) are harmed by voucher programs as public school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options.

Please vote no on bill SB 87.

Brittany McLaughlin
Mom, community member, emphatic human, bank employee

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Ellen Merrill

TITLE: retired art educator, long-time Kansas resident

EMAIL ADDRESS: ellenalyce55@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

Public education is what has made our nation great. If you look at some of the greatest leaders in the United States, you will see that they were educated in public schools.

As a longtime educator, I saw firsthand the huge benefits of a public education had for those students who would not have otherwise not had the opportunity for an education, if it were not free. Taking money away from public schools just makes those who have money be the only ones who have the right to learn.

Our nation is already divided, and the opportunity for those who are rich to become richer because of the tax credits is not fair or equal. So many bright minds will not have the opportunity to learn and grow if the public schools fail from lack of funding.

I ask that you please vote NO on SB 87 to give all young people an equal chance to learn.

Ellen Merrill

Olathe, Kansas

Senate Committee on Education
Opponent Testimony (Written Only) SB 87
February 6, 2025
Submitted by: Dr. Tonya Merrigan, Superintendent
Email: tmerrigan@bluevalleyk12.org

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these written comments in opposition to **SB 87,** expanding student eligibility under the tax credit for low-income students scholarship program, increasing the amount of the tax credit for contributions made pursuant to such program and providing for aggregate tax credit limit increases under certain conditions.

Blue Valley has a student population of more than 22,400 and consistently ranks in the top tier of high performing schools, both in the state and in the nation. (See "Quick Facts" at the end of testimony.)

The primary goal of the Blue Valley district is **to ensure every student attending our schools has the educational programming and opportunities, delivered by quality educators, to allow them to thrive long after they leave our doors.** We embrace every student who walks through our doors and always work to provide them with the tools to succeed.

The Blue Valley Board of Education has a long-standing priority position that states:

> *[Blue Valley] opposes public funding of private schools, including offering public tax credits that decrease state revenue, that do not comply with the same standards and requirements of public-school districts.*

As stated in our position, our Board believes that private schools receiving public dollars, even by a decrease in state revenue, must be held to the same standards, requirements, and governance as that required of public schools. In addition, it appears the fiscal note of expanding this program may reach $20M. For these reasons, we must **strongly oppose** SB 87.

We would like to express our thanks to this committee for its work toward improved student learning in Kansas and, as well, our commitment to work with the committee toward that end.

USD 229 Blue Valley Schools: Quick Facts

K-12 Student Enrollment	21,767	ACT District Composite Average*	22.9
Early Childhood—grade 12 Enrollment	22,450	ACT Statewide Average	19.2
Average Daily Attendance	94.4%	SAT District Average	1357
Graduation Rate	96.7%	SAT Statewide Average	1256
Teacher's with Master's Degree or Higher	76%	*with 91.6 % of graduates taking ACT	

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Allison McLean
TITLE: Kansas Citizen and Public School Parent
EMAIL ADDRESS: hall.allison@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

I am the proud parent of a 2nd grade student in USD 497. My child loves going to school, and I have appreciated the hard work and dedication of the teachers and staff in the schools he has attended in our town. It has been important to both myself and my husband that our child attend public schools, and that we as a family support our local public schools. Growing up, my mother taught 3rd grade in the public schools in my hometown. I saw firsthand the long hours she put into lesson prep and grading. I also saw that she often paid out of her personal finances to ensure she had what was needed for her students. My husband's parents also worked in public schools, in special education and as a school psychologist. For both my husband and I, public schools were the stepping stones to success. Through our hard work, and the hard work of our teachers, we were both able to attend top tier universities, and be successful in our careers. We have chosen Kansas as our home, and where to raise our family. And we have been very happy here for the past 10 years. But our child must be able to get a strong public education for us to stay.

I oppose SB 87, and voucher programs broadly. The existing program already provides a pathway for low-income/at-risk children, and a tax credit to individuals looking to support private schools. Further expanding this program diverts badly needed public school funds from the local schools that serve our children. Recent data has shown that our students are still struggling to regain academic performance as compared to historical data. Societal interruptions from COVID have interrupted key academic and developmental milestones for our children. It is very important that we fully fund and provide our public schools with the

resources to bridge those gaps. Decreasing funding for public schools will only increase the long term impacts for our children. Resulting in widening academic shortfalls, and the resulting negative impacts through adulthood, in their careers, and in our workforce.

Our public schools are open to all children, are located in all parts of our state, and are held to high standards to ensure consistent academic content and performance. Private schools are none of these things. They lack oversight to ensure suitable academic content and performance, and they are not accessible to many of our states' students in rural areas. SB 87 subsidizes the choice of a minority of families to attend private schools, at the detriment of the many children in our public schools.

In closing, I ask you to vote NO on bill SB 87.

Allison McLean
Citizen of Kansas, and Proud Public School Parent
Lawrence, KS

KRIS MEYER
FORMER TITLE I SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND PARENT
KMEYERKC@GMAIL.COM
BILL NUMBER: SB 87
OPPONENT
WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY
FEBRUARY 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to SB 87. As a former Title I school principal with 16 years of service in public education, as well as a parent of two adopted children (from Kansas foster care) in Kansas public schools, I have witnessed the impact of legislative decisions on our schools, teachers, and students. Public dollars should be used for public schools—institutions that serve *all* students, regardless of background, income, or ability. SB 87 expands a program that lacks oversight, diverts much-needed public funds to private schools, and ultimately undermines the commitment Kansas has made to its public education system.

This bill would:

- Open the program to private school students who have never attended a public school, further straying from the program's original intent of supporting at-risk students.
- Expand eligibility beyond income-based needs to include children in foster care, military families, and children of police officers or firefighters—groups that already have access to public schools with support services in place.
- Increase the tax credit for donors from 75% to 100%, creating a tax avoidance loophole that allows corporations and wealthy individuals to funnel money to private schools while being fully reimbursed by the state.
- Raise the program cap from $10 million to $20 million, doubling the amount of public dollars diverted from the state general fund.

The most troubling aspect of this expansion is that it benefits private schools that can selectively admit students based on academic ability, religion, or special needs accommodations. **Unlike public schools, private institutions are not required to accept or support every student.** A program that allows tax dollars to flow into unregulated private institutions while public schools struggle with funding shortages is not in the best interest of Kansas students.

Additionally, **there is no demonstrated need for this expansion**. In 2023, only 1,340 students participated in the program despite 230,000 public school students being eligible. If this program were truly addressing an urgent need, we would see significantly higher participation rates under the existing guidelines. Instead, we have no accountability or transparency in how private schools select students, and we do not know why many eligible students are not participating.

SB 87 is a tax avoidance scheme that benefits the wealthy while weakening Kansas's commitment to a strong, well-funded public education system. As a former principal, I know how crucial adequate funding is for providing quality education, supporting teachers, and ensuring that every child—no matter their circumstances—receives the resources they need to thrive. Instead of diverting tax dollars to private institutions, the legislature should prioritize fully funding special education and ensuring that all public schools have the resources necessary to serve every Kansas student.

I urge you to vote **NO** on SB 87. Our children and educators are counting on us.

Respectfully,
Kris Meyer
Former Title I School Principal and Parent
De Soto, Kansas

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education
NAME: Suni Michaelsen
TITLE: Kansas Citizen & parent of school aged children
EMAIL ADDRESS: sunbun314@yahoo.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

I have children in private schools and still find SB 87 to be nothing but detrimental to *all* schools in Kansas.

The public education system should be built to benefit all children of school age. As Kansas government has failed to fully fund the public school system for years, the children are suffering. Pulling more tax dollars from public schools and sending them to private schools will further deteriorate our system that *should* be built to benefit all students.

As a private school parent I know that many private schools do not provide the special education programs that many children need. Even so much as dyslexia and speech assistance is not offered in private schools and these private school students must rely on the public school services.

In addition the economics of private schools would be thrown into a tailspin with additional students seeking to avoid the failing public schools. Private school costs would skyrocket and the people who choose private schools for religious or other personal

reasons would be at risk of being denied registration and then left with the failing public school system and no other options.

Please, for the sake of our students in *all* schools vote **no** on bill SB 87.

Suni Michaelsen
Kansas Resident and parent of school aged children
Lenexa, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Christina Middleton
TITLE: Parent and Kansas Citizen
EMAIL ADDRESS: Middletonjs4@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only testimony
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

I am a parent of two children in the Shawnee Mission School District. I actively volunteer with the Parent, Teacher, and Student Association. I currently serve on the Site Council for Shawnee Mission West High School and have served for the last 5 years.

I have once before given testimony to the House Committee on Education when I came to share my son's journey with Dyslexia in Kansas. I served on the Dyslexia Task Force, and we implemented sweeping changes to support the children of Kansas so that all children would learn to read.

I understand you have a bill to give my tax dollars to private families to pursue private education. This is devastating to children like mine who need extra services from their school. We are already underfunding special education dollars in the state of Kansas. And what happens in a Private School if a student requires special education (IEP) services? They get bussed to public schools to meet their needs as mandated.

Public tax dollars belong to public schools:

- Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should use those tax dollars to fund special education fully.
- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that provide oversight for our tax dollars. We should not be expanding this

program that already funnels tax payer dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions.

- 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 personal choice to receive a religious or other non-public education.

In closing, I ask you to vote NO on bill HB 2136.

Christina Middleton

Lenexa, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education
In Opposition of Bill SB 87
House Committee on Education
Date of Hearing: February 5, 2025

John Monaghan
Parent in USD497 school district
johnjmonaghaniii@gmail.com

Dear Members of Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill SB 87. I am a parent of children who attend public schools. I strongly oppose the school voucher bill and urge you to vote against it.

As someone who has experienced firsthand the value of public education, I can confidently say that our public schools are the foundation of our communities. They accept and educate every child, regardless of ability, background, or financial circumstances. Public schools do not pick and choose; they are a public service that uplifts society as a whole.

Public education is a public good. Our tax dollars should be invested in the schools that serve every child and are accountable to taxpayers. This bill diverts critical funding away from public schools and directs it to private schools that are not obligated to serve all children or to meet the same accountability standards.

One of the most troubling aspects of this bill is that private schools are not required to accept all children. Families with children who have special needs, disabilities, or who are learning English will find limited, if any, options in private schools. These students, along with countless others, will continue to rely on public schools for their education, but with fewer resources if this bill passes.

This is not true choice. It's a false promise that leaves many children behind.

This bill primarily benefits wealthier families, who already have the means to send their children to private schools. By providing tax credits, the state essentially helps wealthy families reduce their tax burden at the expense of our public schools and other critical public services. Rural taxpayers, in particular, will be subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas, even though rural communities often have no private school options.

Public education is not about individual benefit—it's about collective good. Just as we all contribute to public libraries, roads, and parks regardless of how often we use them, public schools are a shared investment in our state's future.

Public schools operate under rigorous oversight to ensure that taxpayer dollars are being used responsibly and effectively. Private schools, on the other hand, are not held to the same

standards. There are no guarantees that public funds directed to private schools or homeschools through vouchers will be spent on quality education—or any education at all.

Kansans deserve transparency and accountability when it comes to how our tax dollars are spent. This bill undermines that principle.

I am deeply concerned about the negative impact this bill will have on rural communities. Public schools are often the heart of rural areas, providing not just education but also jobs, extracurricular opportunities, and a sense of community. Draining resources from these schools to fund private education in urban areas will harm rural students and communities that already face significant challenges.

I ask this committee to consider the long-term consequences of this bill. It diverts resources from our public schools, weakens the educational foundation of our state, and creates inequities that hurt our most vulnerable children. Instead of supporting voucher programs, let's work together to fully fund public education, including special education, and ensure that every child in Kansas has access to a high-quality education.

Please vote No on bill SB 87

Thank you

John J Monaghan III
533 Lindley Dr
Lawrence, KS 66049

February 2nd, 2025

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony in **strong opposition to SB 87**. This bill seeks to significantly expand the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program in Kansas, further diverting public tax dollars away from our public schools and into private institutions that lack the same level of accountability and oversight.

The original intent of the Tax Credit Scholarship program was to provide low-income, at-risk students with an opportunity to attend private schools. However, the continual expansion of this program by legislative leadership undermines that initial goal and exacerbates inequities in our education system. This latest expansion proposed in SB 87 is especially concerning for several reasons:

1. **Redirecting Public Funds to Private Schools Without Oversight** Private schools that benefit from these diverted funds are not held to the same standards as public schools. They can deny admission based on various criteria, including disability status, academic history, or other subjective factors, which effectively limits access for many students who could benefit from additional educational opportunities.
2. **Diverting Funds from Public Schools to Students Who Have Never Attended Them** SB 87 would allow students already in private schools—who have never attended a public school—to receive funding under the program. This shifts resources away from public schools that are constitutionally required to serve all children and redirects them to families who have already chosen private education, further straining public school budgets and limiting opportunities for those truly in need.
3. **Providing a Full 100% Tax Credit to Donors** Increasing the tax credit from 75% to 100% essentially turns this program into a state-funded subsidy for private schools. Donors would receive a dollar-for-dollar return on their contributions, creating an unfair financial incentive that depletes state tax revenue while benefitting a select group of private institutions. This approach removes necessary taxpayer accountability and transparency.
4. **Doubling the Program's Funding Cap** Raising the cap from $10 million to $20 million further accelerates the diversion of public dollars from our already underfunded public schools. At a time when public schools across Kansas are struggling with teacher shortages, classroom resources, and the need for infrastructure improvements, we should be focusing on strengthening our public

NAME: Amy Moore
TITLE: parent
EMAIL ADDRESS: amooredunn@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only testimony
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Dear Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87

I strongly oppose SB 87. Eighteen years ago, my family specifically chose to move to Kansas for its excellent public schools. We have three children – one who graduated in 2023, another graduating in 2025, and our youngest in 2029. Our experience with Kansas public schools has been outstanding, particularly regarding special education services that our child received – services unavailable at local private schools. In fact, we regularly saw private school students coming to our public elementary school to access these essential services.

Public funds must remain in public schools for one fundamental reason: public schools serve ALL Kansas children. While private schools selectively choose their students, public schools welcome everyone. Most private institutions lack the resources and infrastructure to support students with special needs or English language learners. Furthermore, private schools operate without the rigorous oversight and accountability measures that ensure taxpayer dollars are properly invested in quality education.

In conclusion, public money should stay in public schools. Voucher programs effectively become subsidies for wealthy families while lacking proper oversight and accountability. There is no need for expansion when there are still hundreds of thousands of students eligible under the current guidelines who are not utilizing scholarships.

Please vote no on bill SB 87
Amy Moore
Parent in the Shawnee Mission School District
Prairie Village

education system—not expanding a voucher program that primarily benefits private interests.

Kansas has a constitutional responsibility to provide a quality public education for all students, and expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program moves us in the wrong direction. Public dollars should remain in public schools, where they serve all children equitably, not be funneled into a system that lacks accountability and excludes students based on arbitrary criteria.

I urge you to reject SB 87 and instead prioritize policies that strengthen and support our public education system, ensuring that every Kansas child has access to a high-quality education regardless of their background or financial situation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Eulalio Munoz Jr.

304 SE Hancock

Topeka, Kansas 66607

Taryn Myers
Kansas Citizen and USD 266 parent
tarynmyers@gmail.com
Bill SB 87
Opponent
Written Testimony
February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 87. As a parent of two children in USD 266, Maize, Kansas—one in 7th grade and the other in 10th—I have seen firsthand both the strengths and struggles of our public schools. In addition to my role as a parent, I spent five years working as an elementary school paraprofessional and currently substitute teach in USD 266. My experience within the public school system has been overwhelmingly positive, but it has also opened my eyes to the many challenges our schools face.

Public schools already operate on limited resources, doing their best with what little they have. SB 87 would only make this situation worse, further draining funding from schools that are already struggling. As the President of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), with eight years at the elementary level and four years—and counting—at the middle school level, I have witnessed firsthand how schools rely on community support to fill critical gaps. Unfortunately, not all schools have the benefit of a strong PTO to supplement their needs.

Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will divert even more funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education, to subsidize the private choices of some parents and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas. This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public school that serve **ALL** kids and gives it to families who have made a personal choice to receive a religious or other non-public education.

This bill disproportionately harms low-income families and rural communities. It primarily benefits the wealthy while placing an even greater burden on those already struggling. Reading through the tax credits outlined in this bill is heartbreaking because I see firsthand the students it will leave behind. Rural students (and communities) will be harmed as public-school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options. The Tax Credit Scholarship program primarily benefits those in urban areas of our state. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka. SB2136 does not take care of the MAJORITY of Kansas kids.

I urge you to reconsider the long-term consequences this bill will have on our public schools and the families who depend on them. Please vote no to bill SB 87. Thank you for your time and for the work you do for our state.

Sincerely,
Taryn Myers
Maize, KS 67101
Kansas Citizen and USD 266 parent
tarynmyers@gmail.com

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

Adrienne Newlin
Kansas citizen; parent of public school student
adrienne.newlin@gmail.com
Bill SB 87
Opponent
WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. I am a small business owner, homeowner and parent who understands the value of strong public schools in our community.

Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that provide oversight for our tax dollars. We should not be expanding this program that already funnels tax payer dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions. Our tax dollars should not go to private schools 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.

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 personal choice to receive a religious or other non-public education.

Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education.

I ask that you VOTE NO on SB 87.

Adrienne Newlin
Overland Park, KS

SB 87 Opposition Testimony (Written-Only)

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Joseph Nicholas
TITLE: Private citizen
EMAIL ADDRESS: joseph.h.nicholas@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: [choose one]
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Ericson & Members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opposition to bill SB 87.

I oppose this bill for several reasons:
First, this bill will reduce funding for cash-strapped public schools and fund cash rich private schools. To be honest, it is shameful for a state that has historically had a well-funded, exemplary educational system to now have a system where public-school teachers regularly provide teaching supplies from their own pocket.

Second, this bill will increase the education gap between the haves and have-nots. As funds are taken away from public schools and given to private schools, the quality of education in Kansas public schools will undoubtedly decline. This will lead to more families who can afford private education sending their children to private schools, which, in turn, will further reduce funding for public schools. Eventually, we will be left with a two tier system where wealthy children have access to adequate education, and poor children do not. As we learned from Brown vs Topeka Board of Education "separate but equal" is not constitutional; "separate but unequal" is even worse.

Third, this bill, if enacted, will lead to a pointless waste of taxpayer dollars in defending inevitable lawsuits. Without a doubt, this legislation will be challenged, which could lead to a protracted and expensive court battle. Our current Attorney General is certainly not one to shy away from any lawsuit that garners him additional media exposure, but he doesn't have the best track record in winning them.

In short, this bill is nothing more than an attempted tax dodge by the wealthy at the cost of our children's education. I urge you to vote no on SB 87 for the good of public education in Kansas.

Thank you for your time,
Joseph Nicholas
Leawood, 66206

129-2

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Ann Norbury

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, grandparent

EMAIL ADDRESS: annknorbury@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

As a parent of three Shawnee Mission School District graduates, I value their public school education. Each daughter then attended Kansas universities, and then went on to earn master's degrees.

During their grade and high school years, I was very involved in PTA and supported public education that serves ALL students. Public funds should support public schools. I'm opposed to any voucher system that would fund private schools.

I'm also concerned about draining funds from public schools in rural districts. Of the 105 Kansas counties, many rural districts do not even have the option of a private school. In these rural districts, the public high school is the center of the community. A voucher plan would harm rural public schools by eroding their funding to support private schools in wealthy suburban areas. Private schools do not have accountability and can "pick and choose" which students to accept. Vouchers are not fair and an inappropriate use of public tax dollars.

The Kansas legislature has an obligation to fund public schools that serve all students. Please direct your efforts to strengthen public schools throughout Kansas.

I encourage you to vote NO on SB 87.

Thank you,

Ann Norbury

Shawnee, KS 66203

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Melinda Parks
TITLE: Kansas Citizen, Parent of Kansas Educator
EMAIL ADDRESS: melindaparks85@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

I am a lifelong Kansan, having graduated from a rural Kansas high school and the University of Kansas. We raised our daughter in the Shawnee Mission School District, and she now teaches in the Turner School District.

I believe one of the best traits of our state historically has been our focus on quality public education. This was universally true across the state. Public education was important to my grandparents, to my parents who were educators, to my husband and I and to our children, who are all educators. Strong public schools are critical to the ongoing maintenance of high-quality communities where people want to live and work.

I am vehemently opposed to SB 75 and voucher programs in general. First and foremost, public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers. Education Tax Credits divert funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education to subsidize the private choices of some parents thus having the same negative impact as a voucher program. This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a private choice to receive a religious or other non-public education, many who can easily afford that choice. Instead of providing tax credits to Kansans who choose not to send their kids to public school, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to ***fully fund special education*** that is currently underfunded by $173 million. Tax credits for private education are another way for wealthy families to reduce their tax burden and avoid paying their fair share.

Second, private schools are not required to accept all students. Public dollars should provide funding to schools who will accept any child, not those that can pick and choose which families they want to serve. Families with children with special needs, disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language will not benefit from these tax credits as few private schools can accommodate their needs.

Finally, public schools are critical to the development of healthy communities in our state. Public schools are a public service and paid for by everyone, regardless of whether they use them or not. Just as we would not give a tax rebate to people who buy books instead of using a public library or who own private vacation homes instead of camping in national parks, the government should not refund private school tuition to parents who choose not to send their children to public schools. A strong public education system provides benefits to the entire society, not just the individual students. The potential consequences of diverting public tax dollars to those who choose to homeschool or send their kids to private school undermines the state's ability to fund our public schools. In addition, there is a significant risk that some children may not receive adequate educate if parents or guardians seek to receive the tax credit and yet provide little or no education in exchange. The lack of accountability for education provided for private or home schools makes this a real risk to Kansas students.

Again, I ask that you vote NO on SB75 for the sake of maintaining strong Kansas public schools, fully funded, accountable and available to all children.

Sincerely,

Melinda Parks, Lenexa, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Kathryn Peters
TITLE: Registered Nurse (hospice), concerned parent
EMAIL ADDRESS: Katie.peters.rn@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT OPPONENT OR NEUTRAL: OPPONENT
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Dear members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

I am very concerned that this program allows for tax avoidance, especially among wealthy donors. I believe that every parent should have the right to choose how to educate their children, but I take issue with diverting public funds to subsidize this choice for the wealthy.

I believe that tax dollars collected from the public should remain in spaces that benefit the public. This tax credit would take public funds and divert them back into a private sphere that is not available to everyone. This would then shrink the budgets at public schools and hurt my children's education. I do not want to be pushed toward the "choice" of private schools because my kids public school has insufficient funds.

Additionally there is no oversight or accountability to how these funds are spent. Public schools are required to serve all but private schools can pick and choose. I am gravely concerned about the path that we are on by continually expanding this tax credit and thereby siphoning off public education funds. This inherently has the risk of worsening an education system already separated by class and a parent's ability to pay. Since local property tax is a large portion of funding for schools, we already observe that higher income areas are better funded and staffed. I believe this tax credit would go on to further this divide.

As a child I was home schooled. My parents made that choice and it worked well for them. As a mother now myself, I greatly resent the shift of resources away from public school. I do not want to be in a situation where the public education is not well funded and then as a result I slowly loose the ability to choose public education.

In conclusion, I urge you to oppose this bill that allows wealthy donors to avoid taxes, thereby hurting my child's public education.

Sincerely,

Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Attachment 13

Kathryn Peters
Overland Park, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Lauren Proffer

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: Lolo9955@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only Testimony
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. As a citizen of Kansas who supports teachers and children, this is an extremely important topic. My tax payer dollars should be benefiting all, not just a few.

This program already allows for tax avoidance, especially for wealthy donors. Expanding the tax credit to 100% is even more egregious. The Tax Credit Scholarship program, like most voucher programs, is welfare for the wealthy.

This bill takes money that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a personal choice to receive a religious or other non-public education.

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

Our tax dollars should not go to private schools 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.

Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars.

The Tax Credit Scholarship program primarily benefits those in urban areas of our state. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka.

In conclusion, work for Kansas by voting no on Bill SB 87.

Lauren Proffer

Manhattan, KS

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF KANSAS

Date of Testimony: Thursday, February 6, 2025

Bill Number: **SB 87**: Expanding student eligibility under the tax credit for low income students scholarship program, increasing the amount of the tax credit for contributions made pursuant to such program and providing for aggregate tax credit limit increases under certain conditions.

Disposition: Opponent; Written only Testimony

From: Martha Pint, President; League of Women Voters Kansas

To: Chair Senator Erickson and Members of the Senate Committee on Education

The League of Women Voters of Kansas opposes SB 87 which would divert funds for public education to be used for vouchers for private school tuition. We applaud the legislature for fully funding general education in the current year, but since special education is not fully funded by Kansas, as required by state law, we can ill-afford to fund private schools.

Additionally, what would we be funding if we funded vouchers? Certainly Kansas citizens can choose to home school or send their children to private schools, but those education programs are not scrutinized, directed or measured by the state and should not use state funds. We encourage you to fully fund public school education in Kansas, the cornerstone of our democracy and not use education funds for unregulated private education.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your work to fund public education in Kansas.

We ask that you vote NO on SB 87.

Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Attachment 13

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Cynthia Ptacek

TITLE: Kansas Parent of School-Aged Children

EMAIL ADDRESS: cindyptacek@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Dear members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

My 2 kids attend Briarwood Elementary, a public elementary education center in the Shawnee Mission School District. I personally attended public school from kindergarten through 12th grade in USD 265 in Goddard, Kansas. Public education is so important because it gives *all* children living in a school district the tools they need to think critically, analyze information, and make informed decisions. A

Public schools are more than just buildings. They represent our shared values and beliefs. We believe that education is so important that it should be free for everyone. All young people should have the chance to get ready for life, college, careers, and being good citizens. In a diverse country like the United States, people with different views and backgrounds need to learn to understand each other. The founders of our country also believed that having educated citizens is crucial to protect our democracy from leaders who might try to deceive or manipulate us.

The Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program already exists in Kansas, and like other voucher programs, this program diverts public tax dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are *allowed to deny admission* for any number of reasons.

Leadership in the legislature is continually trying to expand this program beyond its original intent, which was to help low-income (at-risk) students attending one of the 100 lowest performing public schools.

The program is no longer for at-risk (low income) kids.

Plus, donors who funnel money to private schools through the Tax Credit Scholarship program would be reimbursed in full by the state. This can result in some taxpayers, especially wealthy taxpayers and corporations, paying zero in state taxes. By providing tax credits for these donations to fund private school tuition, the state general funds are reduced putting funding for our public schools (and other public goods) at risk.

Please vote no on SB 87. Public dollars belong with our public schools that accept and educate *all* kids.

Cynthia Ptacek, Kansas Parent of School-Aged Children, Prairie Village

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Marsha Ratzel
TITLE: Kansas Citizen, retired teacher, grandparent
EMAIL ADDRESS: mratzelster@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY:written
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Dear Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB87. Public schools serve every child who walks through the door, which is the power of the United States of America. I am a proud graduate of Kansas public schools, and my three children are also. Kansas public high schools allowed my oldest daughters to participate in debate teams that were of unmatched quality/fun from across the USA. My other daughter had more in-lab chemistry and biology lab experience than her freshman college peers. To take money away from that K12 system is to dilute its power. We also know that the existing Scholarship program is underutilized, so there is no reason to expand it until it reaches maximum capacity. Why fix a problem that doesn't exist?

Expanding a Tax Credit program like this weakens the public education system that has served our state so well for decades. I know this firsthand as a Kansas public school middle school math teacher with over 20+ years of in-the-classroom experience. Our public schools have a long-standing tradition of success, with many of our students going on to excel in college and their careers. This is a testament to the quality of education our public schools provide. I'm proud of Kansas public schools, and you should be too.

Private schools can choose who they serve. Public schools, however, serve every student, regardless of their abilities, background, or income. This inclusivity is vital to our society, as it ensures that every child has the opportunity to learn and grow.

These bills never consider at-risk students, even though it seems to be its focus. It sounds good, but not to someone who has been a teacher in the trenches. Why? Because it takes specialized education and lots of experience to work with them, which private schools don't possess. That is the power of the K12 systems, whether we are talking about learning disabilities, a child who doesn't speak English as their first language, or someone who has a physical disability. Do you realize what public school delivers? For example, I've had students in my classroom who had feeding tubes because they had cerebral palsy. I couldn't do this without the help of the school nurse. In a private school, this child wouldn't be fully integrated into a classroom of peers. Or I've had students who were adopted from Russian orphanages and still working to overcome the trauma of that upbringing. In a private school, this child would have been segregated until they were verbal(yes, in middle

school). Instead, the public school allowed them to sit through their "silent period." The social worker coached me, as the math teacher, on how to work with the students even if they didn't talk so they felt included in the class and by me. They were with their peers, which helped them not only learn math but also come out of their shells. Imagine teaching pre-algebra to those students. It took a whole team to help deliver math instruction to them....we did it, and they flourished over time. By the time they went to high school, they were talking and had overcome much.

Private schools cannot help the at-risk students that the Scholarship Program targets as well as public schools. I have many colleagues who teach in parochial and private schools. None of them have the specialized staff we have in the public schools, and end up busing students to the public schools for special education support. What kind of education is for a student to get on a bus to come to another facility to attend specialized services? Many of the Catholic schools in our area do this since they don't have the Special Ed teacher to help kids, and while I'm glad they take advantage of that capability, think of how much more effective it would be if the Special Ed teacher were integrated on the team that was with the Catholic school itself. Instead, it's disjointed and ineffective. We have a responsibility to these students and cannot afford to let them fall through the cracks.

This bill threatens the kind of help and specialized teaching that is impossible if you take away resources from the public schools and give them to private schools. If the bill is passed, the potential negative impact on public school resources, such as staff and facilities, is a serious concern that should not be overlooked.

Vote no on SB87. The only responsible thing to do is to fight to keep the integrity of the public school system strong and viable. Think about the long-term implications of this bill. Please don't make the decision that will cheat my grandkids out of the best public education system that I had and that their parents had.

Marsha Ratzel
Prairie Village, Kansas

136-2

NAME: Julie A Reid
TITLE: Kansas Citizen, Parent/Grandparent, MS, CPM
EMAIL ADDRESS: jar8286@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only
DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Dear members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Julie A Reid, and I live in Shawnee, KS 66227. I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87.

As the parent of two girls who attended and graduated from USD 501 (Topeka), and the grandparent of two boys attending USD 229 (Blue Valley), and two boys attending USD 497 (Lawrence), I stand firmly against SB 87. I also attended USD 501 and graduated from Topeka High School, and I know first-hand from personal experience and from the experiences of my family that the public schools are providing a first-rate educational experience, as well as a real-world, diverse experience that well prepares students for life after graduation. I am someone who understands the value of our public schools to an educated society and to the vitality of our communities.

I respectfully ask that you **vote NO** on this bill for the following reasons:

Kansas SB 87, in its current form, proposes significant changes to the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program that already exists in Kansas. Like other voucher programs, this program diverts public tax dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to deny admission for any number of reasons. These changes could have severe consequences for Kansas Public Schools. The donation limit per donor (corporation or individual) is $500,000. Any amount donated will provide a dollar for dollar reduction in the taxpayer's tax liability. Donors who funnel money to private schools through the Tax Credit Scholarship program would be reimbursed in full by the state. If the tax liability is less than the donated amount, the tax credit can be carried forward to future years.

This can result in some taxpayers, especially wealthy taxpayers and corporations, paying zero in state taxes. By providing tax credits for these donations to fund private school tuition, the state general funds are reduced, putting funding for our public schools (and other public goods) at risk.

It should also be noted that tax credits are much more beneficial than the tax deductions most of us receive when we make a charitable contribution. These donors are already receiving a 75% tax credit. A 100% tax credit would provide an incentive for even more people to divert the money they owe in taxes to private schools.

KANSAS INTER FAITH ACTION

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

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

Written Testimony In Opposition to SB 87, Education Opportunity Tax Credit
by Rabbi Moti Rieber, Executive Director
Senate Committee on Education, Sen. Renee Erickson, Chair
February 6, 2025

Mme. Chair, Members of the Committee:

My name is Rabbi Moti Rieber, and I am the executive director of Kansas Interfaith Action, a statewide, multi-faith issue-advocacy organization that works on behalf of people of faith and the public on a variety of economic and social justice issues. We partner with many of the major mainline denominations in Kansas and also represent hundreds of communities of faith and individuals of faith and conscience throughout Kansas. I rise in opposition to SB 87.

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

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

Public funding of private and religious education – whether via vouchers, or educational savings accounts, or as here, tax deductibility of donations to scholarship funds – undermines this commitment. It does not improve academic achievement.

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

> The fundamental purpose of universal public education at the elementary and secondary levels is to provide equal and adequate educational opportunities for all children and young people, and thereby ensure the nation an enlightened citizenry.
>
> We believe in the principle of universal public education, and we reaffirm our support of public educational institutions. At the same time, we recognize and pledge our continued allegiance to the US constitutional principle that citizens have a right to establish and maintain private schools from private

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

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

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

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

This program takes money out of the public education system through tax breaks to the donors and gives it to private and parochial schools. The 100% tax write off in this bill is far more than the dedication given to any other charitable contribution. The state has no compelling interest in funding private and parochial education - the opposite, in fact. SB 87 is yet another effort to support private and religious schools with public money - in this case, unpaid taxes. It undermines our commitment to our public schools, and it undermines the Kansas Constitution's prohibition against using public funds for religious education. . Kansas has in recent years managed to fund our public schools fully and adequately, as our Constitution demands. This measure would undermine that commitment, and I urge you to oppose it.

Thank you for your attention.

Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that provide oversight for our tax dollars. We should not be expanding this program that already diverts taxpayer dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to discriminate in admissions.

This bill takes public tax dollars that could be used to strengthen our public schools that serve all kids and gives it to families who have made a personal choice to receive a religious or other non-public education.

Instead of providing tax credits to fund private schools, the legislature should be using those tax dollars to fully fund special education.

Private schools are not available to all, private schools get to choose who to accept. We should not be reducing state revenues by providing tax credits that divert taxes owed to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve. Private schools can choose to admit only the best and brightest students, leaving other children behind.

Our tax dollars should not go to private schools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children. There are no controls in place to ensure eligible at-risk students who apply for a scholarship are granted one, as private schools are allowed to set their own admission standards. And there are no controls in place to ensure those who do receive scholarships receive a quality education. Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge you to reject Kansas Senate Bill 87. While the intentions behind the bill may be well-meaning, its potential harm far outweighs any benefits it may offer. Instead, I call for more thoughtful and inclusive discussions, as well as consideration of alternative approaches that are less harmful to our public schools and students, especially those from low-income families.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony. I trust that you will take the necessary steps to protect the well-being of Kansans and carefully weigh the consequences of this bill.

Sincerely,

Julie A Reid

Shawnee, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education
Bernadette Roche
Parent of three in USD 232; Teacher in USD 512
berniemgr@hotmail.com
Opponent
Written Testimony
Feb 6, 2025

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 87.

I have a unique perspective on this bill. My three children attended private school for eight years. They attended public school until graduation. Two have graduated USD 232 and attend public universities. One is a current sophomore in USD 232. In addition to being a parent of students in both private and public schools, I am a proud educator who has taught in both private and public schools for almost 30 years. While our entire family benefited from private school, it was truly our public school experiences that have created the current voters and citizens that we are.

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

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

improved. There are no controls in place to ensure that children are receiving a quality education. Kansas taxpayers deserve more.

In closing, please vote no on bill SB 87.

Thank you,
Bernadette Roche
Shawnee, KS

Roth, Susan

SB87 Opponent Written

I am writing as a concerned citizen of the great State of Kansas and as a life-long resident and voter. My family has raised children in the public school system in Kansas, and I am proud to say that every child in Kansas is currently afforded the opportunity to participate in a healthy and productive education system. Whether a family chooses to send their children to a Private School, or they are in a rural community where the only option is Public education – Kansas takes pride in providing quality education.

That high standard of education in Kansas must not change. I vehemently oppose providing a tax refund/credit to those families who opt out of Public school in Kansas. Such a decision is detrimental to our State education system and is an abuse of power by the Committee if this action proceeds without a vote. Our public schools need all the revenue and support that our State can provide. They are educating the next generation of tax-payers, voters, employees, employers, and residents of this State. Do not cut funding to our public schools and do not place priority on private education over an education that is free to all students regardless of their access to private facilities.

We do not want to go the way of other states who have engaged in this experiment. I urge you to listen to your constituents and oppose any sort of tax credit or voucher system in Kansas education.

Sincerely,

Sarah Roth