

February 5, 2025

Tara Schneider
54 Detroit Drive
South Hutchinson, KS 67505
Tara_85_04@hotmail.com

WRITTEN PROPONENT TESTIMONY FOR SB 87

Thank you, Senate Education Committee Assistant, Cyndie for accepting my email. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 87, the low-income tax credit student scholarship bill.

My name is Tara Schneider and my daughters, Kalani and Rayne, attend Holy Cross Catholic school. The low income tax credit scholarship program has significantly helped our school and the other schools in our diocese. We feel this is a topic at hand that our state must expand. Offering young people an education opportunity in our schools has been so highly valued. The changes to this program will be even more appealing. At the end of the day, it is the child that benefits the most.

In conclusion, please support SB 87. With your support, the children in the Wichita Catholic Diocese and other private schools have the opportunity for an education that best suits their needs.

Thank you.

Tara Schneider
South Hutchinson, KS 67505

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Linda Schroeder

TITLE: Kansas Citizen and taxpayer

EMAIL ADDRESS: lindas3@sbcglobal.net

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.

This bill will divert more public tax dollars to private schools that lack oversight and are allowed to deny admission for any number of reasons. This will be yet another step in an attempt to destroy our public school system which accepts all students.

The original intent was to help low-income students attending one of the 100 lowest performing public schools. The program is no longer for at-risk (low income) kids. This latest expansion would:

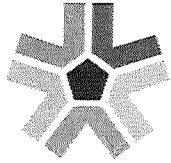
- Increase the tax credit received by “donors” to the program from 75% to a 100% dollar for dollar tax credit.
- Allow for an increase in the program cap from \$10 million to \$20 million

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” funnel money to private schools and are 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 is a tax avoidance scheme that can bring big benefits to those receiving the tax credit while reducing the state general fund used to fund our public schools, maintain our roads and bridges, and more.

Please vote no on bill SB 87.

Linda Schroeder
Overland Park



SHAWNEE MISSION

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Opponent Written Testimony on Senate Bill 87
Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Dr. Michael Schumacher
Superintendent, Shawnee Mission School District

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee:

The Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) is opposed to Senate Bill 87. We're focused on educating students and efficiently managing the public resources from the State and our local taxpayers. Senate Bill 87 is familiar, and we continue to object to and testify against bills that expand the scope of non-public school scholarship program.

The Shawnee Mission School District Board approved the Legislative Platform 2025 that includes the following statement:

Strong public schools, grounded in our state constitution, have been the foundation for the success of the state of Kansas, and are crucial to the future well-being of our democracy, in Kansas and across the nation. SMSD supports policies that maintain local non-partisan democratic control over public education in Kansas, and rejects policies that would divert public resources to non-public entities, including private and home schools. To support these principles, SMSD will:

- *Support legislation to repeal or reduce the private education tuition tax credit program, and oppose vouchers, corporate scholarships or similar programs, and oppose any efforts to divert public, taxpayer funds to private education savings accounts.*
- *Advocate that all institutions receiving public money be held to the same standards of performance and accountability.*

The provisions of Senate Bill 87 are contrary to the Board's statement. Further, the automatic increase of the program by 25 percent per year is an additional negative component, which will unnecessarily drain additional resources from public schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Dr. Michael Schumacher, Superintendent
Shawnee Mission School District
913-993-6200

NAME: Debra J. Schneider

TITLE: Kansas resident, parent, tax payer and educator

EMAIL ADDRESS: debschneider49@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: SB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written testimony

DATE OF HEARING: February 5, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 87.

As a Kansas taxpayer, former full-time Kansas public school teacher, parent of Kansas public school educated children and a current Kansas public school substitute teacher, I am writing to express my FIRM opposition to HB 2136. The thought that my tax dollars, paid by my family's hard work, will go to funding private school vouchers is incomprehensible. The church I attend has a private day school associated with it. I love my church and the day school, however, never sent my children there as the cost was out of reach for us AND we had wonderful public schools in our neighborhood for our children to attend. The parents who send their children to this school can either easily afford to do so OR have chosen to make a private school their priority and made room in their budget for that. I love that we have that choice. It's important to me and to my neighbors, that our public schools remain strong, not only for the families who send their children to them, but to keep our communities and property values strong. Tax refunds for school vouchers have NO place in our community and in the State of Kansas

Please vote NO on SB87

Debra J. Schneider

4204 W. 91st St.

Prairie Village, KS 66207

public school parent and educator

NAME: Amy Schrumpf-Goode
TITLE: Parent to two children in KS public schools
EMAIL ADDRESS: amyjsgoode21@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: Bill SB 87
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written
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 two children in the public school system (which is already underfunded, thanks to Republicans) so it seems ignorant to me to pull more money away from these students. This will create a huge negative impact, especially in smaller towns (who have the voters you rely on). I am a recipient of 12 years of Catholic school and I can tell you that my education wasn't as good as it would have been, should I have attended public school. The private schools don't have the same oversight, the teachers don't have as good of credentials and education, so everyone loses when you pass these bills. Except for the rich. They will save money and likely will donate more to your campaigns. It's not lost on me how this negatively affects most of your constituents, but helps you. I haven't even gotten started on how this will negatively affect the budget. How will you replace the lost tax money? Proposing this bill is irresponsible and ignorant.

I request confirmation that my testimony has been received and added to the relevant conferee list.

I request that you vote no on bill SB 87.

Amy Schrumpf-Goode
Parent
Overland Park, KS

NAME: DeAnna Schulz

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: deannaschulz22@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.

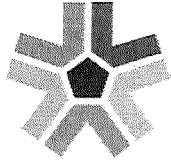
As the daughter of two lifetime Kansas public school educators I was raised to understand the importance of strong public schools. This bill will take more money away from public schools, something that hurts teachers, students, and our communities overall. One of the items I found most alarming about this bill is the tax credit for donors. Incentivizing wealthy citizens or corporations is the wrong way to support our state and public school students. I was also surprised to learn that 60 of the 105 counties in Kansas don't have private school options for students. This sure looks like a bill that isn't at all applicable to over half our counties.

Our schools are already struggling to support teachers, programs and students. Taking money away from them is not the answer.

In closing I ask that you vote no on SB 87.

DeAnna Schulz

Lenexa, KS



SHAWNEE MISSION

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Opponent Written Testimony on Senate Bill 87
Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025
Dr. Michael Schumacher
Superintendent, Shawnee Mission School District

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee:

The Shawnee Mission School District (SMSD) is opposed to Senate Bill 87. We're focused on educating students and efficiently managing the public resources from the State and our local taxpayers. Senate Bill 87 is familiar, and we continue to object to and testify against bills that expand the scope of non-public school scholarship program.

The Shawnee Mission School District Board approved the Legislative Platform 2025 that includes the following statement:

Strong public schools, grounded in our state constitution, have been the foundation for the success of the state of Kansas, and are crucial to the future well-being of our democracy, in Kansas and across the nation. SMSD supports policies that maintain local non-partisan democratic control over public education in Kansas, and rejects policies that would divert public resources to non-public entities, including private and home schools. To support these principles, SMSD will:

- Support legislation to repeal or reduce the private education tuition tax credit program, and oppose vouchers, corporate scholarships or similar programs, and oppose any efforts to divert public, taxpayer funds to private education savings accounts.*
- Advocate that all institutions receiving public money be held to the same standards of performance and accountability.*

The provisions of Senate Bill 87 are contrary to the Board's statement. Further, the automatic increase of the program by 25 percent per year is an additional negative component, which will unnecessarily drain additional resources from public schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Dr. Michael Schumacher, Superintendent
Shawnee Mission School District
913-993-6200

**Sandra Sherry, bsherry1030@gmail.com
Parent in Shawnee Mission School District
SB 87 Opposition Testimony
Senate Education Committee
February 6, 2025**

Dear Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 87. Here are some of the reasons why I oppose this bill:

- I believe public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children and that are accountable to taxpayers.
- Increasing the tax credit to 100% provides special tax treatment to those who choose to donate through this program that funds private schools versus those who donate to other nonprofits.
- Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children.

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

Please vote no on SB 87.

Sincerely,

Sandra Beth Sherry
Prairie Village, KS



Kansas PTA
715 SW 10th Street, Topeka KS 66612
www.kansas-pta-legislative.org
kansaspta@gmail.com

February 6, 2025

Remote Testimony to Senate Education Committee

Honorable Chair, Senator Renee Erickson

Cyndie Rexer, Committee Assistant

785-296-7476 Cyndie.Rexer@senate.ks.gov, s.Education@senate.ks.gov

Room 445-S, State Capitol Building

Opposed to Senate Bill 87 – Expansion of Tax Credit Scholarship Program

Hearing: Thursday, February 6, 2025, 1:30 PM Room 144-S

Honorable Chair Erickson and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide remote testimony regarding SB 87 – Expansion of the tax credit scholarship program. The Kansas PTA is opposed to this bill and the use of public funds to subsidize the private school system ([KS PTA Legislative Platform](#)).

Kansas PTA shared the same concerns with the House Education Committee members ([Testimony Opposing HB 2316](#)) and as noted in our previous testimony dating back to 2014 when the tax credit scholarship program was first established. Our opposition to vouchers and voucher-type programs stems from multiple concerns and mounting evidence of negative impact on vulnerable youth.

No Need for Expansion. School choice is not parent choice and eligibility under the [Kansas Tax Credit Scholarship \(TCS\)](#) Program has not equaled access. This program continues to leave millions in scholarship funds unallocated and no scholarship voucher offers for over 235,000 students eligible for the free/reduced lunch program. Ever since the TCS was enacted in 2014, participating private schools have left up to \$6 million in scholarships unspent, which equates to about 625 unfilled student slots annually, on average. When eligibility was expanded last year beyond students participating in the free/reduced price lunch program, to those living at 250% of the poverty level, program participation jumped from 1,100 to 2,300. While the TCS program is not required to report on the student demographics of recipients, participation doubled following this eligibility expansion beyond the K-12 public school trigger for at-risk funding. Essentially, the TCS now allows the private, non-profit school systems to skip over at-risk public school students who may not be ready for kindergarten, to skip over the students with severe learning and behavioral challenges, to skip over the students whose current skills and knowledge are at Level 1 on the Kansas Assessments.

Private School Entitlement Program. The proposed changes to the tax credit scholarship program run contrary to the original rationale used by those who advocated to establish the program in the first place – to provide an option for at-risk students enrolled in the public schools, particularly families living in communities with high rates of poverty. What was said to be about the students, is changing into a program to subsidize the private school system. This next expansion bill appears to be more of an exercise to broaden eligibility for the benefit of the private school systems, at the taxpayers' expense, than for the at-risk students.

- Is this bill intending to remove *public school enrollment* from eligibility, as noted in the first few lines, if not to explicitly allocate public funds to private school students?
- Why raise the program cap, when the program has left millions of dollars on the table each year (see also KS LPA, April 2022)?
- Why expand eligibility beyond the 240,000 students who do not qualify for free or reduced priced lunch program, when slots for scholarship funds still go unfilled – and create a loophole through which at-risk students can be passed over for students whose educational challenges tend to be less demanding?
 - Note, the Kansas legislature has yet to provide public schools with weighted funding for 37,000 students eligible for reduced price lunch (185% of poverty), let alone up to 250% of the poverty level as is done for private school students. If new taxpayer dollars are going to be allocated, let's remain focused on adequate and equitably resources for the public neighborhood schools in which these students live and attend.
- Why expand eligibility through high school, when there are only 16 accredited private high schools in the entire state? This undermines major steps in Kansas to ensure equity regardless of zip code.
- Why increase a tax credit subsidy from 70% to 100%, when some state legislators argue the state doesn't have enough money to fully fund special education?

Tax Avoidance vs Tax Deduction. The proposed increase in *the tax credit allowance for private school tuition up to 100%* and the increase to the cap on *the aggregate tax credit limit* removes more public funds from the state revenue stream and shifts the financial burden of private school tuition for a select few onto the masses. While most financial acts of charity are recognized by a tax deduction, the current program and proposed expansion is legislated tax avoidance. Further, this change would expand the transfer of wealth from rural communities to high population centers, where the private school systems reside.

Cost Prohibitive, with No Oversight. Several of the Kansas parents and students who have testified over the years in support of the Tax Credit Scholarship Program have uniformly praised their private school experience most notably for the small class sizes. Ten to 12 students per class is simply NOT an option for the public school system that serves nearly 500,000 Kansas kids. Our public schools would require significantly more state aid, more teachers and building space if the Kansas legislature were to mirror private school class sizes for all Kansas students. Further, private schools can pick and choose which students to admit and retain, with no academic or financial oversight from the public.

No Kansas Evidence to Warrant Expansion. After 10 years of implementation, no student impact data has been reported, and no legislative audit has been conducted on the educational progress and outcomes of the students who applied for or received scholarships. We looked for evidence that would warrant expansion, but instead found annual reports, lacking in meaningful oversight (annual reports). The private school tax credit scholarship program reporting requirements:

- do not tell us about the Kansas Assessment scores of the scholarship recipients, particularly in comparison to similar students who did not receive scholarships,
- do not report on Kansas Assessment scores of the private schools who received public taxpayer funds, particularly in comparison to public schools serving similar populations,
- do not tell us about scholarship student retention rates, graduation rates, college enrollment rates, college persistence rates,
- do not tell us how many scholarship students the private schools *transitioned* back [streaming link] to public schools for their failure to help these at-risk youth.

“There is always going to be a time, as they [students] mature up to high school. And if they don’t start passing some classes, they are not going to graduate from our schools. Because we have a higher academic standard. So, we have to transition kids to a different school, just because they are not going to meet the educational requirements. But that is their own choice, because of how they worked in the schools”

(<https://youtu.be/cGFuVI5qLjU?t=3355>, Director of Development Catholic Diocese of Wichita, KS House K12 Budget Committee, Jan 2021, 56:00 min mark)

Our public schools are the heart of Kansas communities, serving 90% of school age youth. Our teachers and administrators are committed to preparing all kids to thrive in work and in life. Creating opportunities for every child to achieve and be successful serves to strengthen the viability of a thriving Kansas future. The Kansas PTA urges you to vote NO on SB 87 expansion of the Tax Credit Scholarship program. Thank you for your consideration of our opposition.

Mary F. Sinclair, PhD
Kansas PTA Advocacy Team
@KsPTALeg

Cc: Denise Sultz, Kansas PTA President
Devin Wilson, VP of Advocacy
Rachel Russell, Legislative Liaison
Kansas PTA Advocacy Team, KansasPTA@gmail.com

THE PTA POSITION

Kansas PTA is a nonpartisan association that promotes the welfare of children and youth. The PTA does not endorse any candidate or political party. Rather, we advocate for policies and legislation that affect Kansas youth in alignment with our legislative platform and priorities. PTA mission and purpose have remained the same since our inception over 100 years ago, focused on facilitating every child’s potential and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Sarah Shouse

EMAIL ADDRESS: sarah_shouse@hotmail.cm

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.

The current tax credit of 75% already provides a lucrative benefit to those choosing to divert their tax dollars to private schools. Expanding the tax credit to 100% allows these taxpayers, especially the wealthy, to completely avoid paying taxes in the state of Kansas.

Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will divert even more funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education, to subsidize the personal choices of some parents and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas.

Public tax dollars belong with public schools-- the 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.

As a parent of a child with special needs, I have grave concerns!! 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.

In closing, please vote no on bill SB 87.

Sarah Shouse, PhD
Parent of children in SMSD
Prairie Village, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Kristen Sittig

TITLE: Kansas Citizen and public educator

EMAIL ADDRESS: Kristen.sittig@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.

The Tax Credit Scholarship program this bill seeks to expand was intended to benefit at-risk students who attended a low performing school. It has already been expanded to benefit families earning WELL ABOVE the median income in our state, and the requirement that students attend an unsatisfactory school have been removed. Any donors already receive a very generous tax credit.

The proposed expansion to students already attending private schools does not benefit at-risk students. Families sending their children to private schools should not have their decisions subsidized by the public at large. There are no controls to ensure that at-risk students who apply for a scholarship are granted one, and expanding the pool of people who can apply for a scholarship only serves to take limited spots from the students who were the intended beneficiaries of the program in the first place.

The increased tax credits SB 87 includes only serves to funnel more public tax money to private entities, to the detriment of funds used to fund schools and to maintain public infrastructure like roads and bridges. The 100% tax credit proposed by this bill provides preferential treatment for those who choose to donate to the Tax Credit Scholarship program versus other Kansas nonprofits. The existing tax credit already allows for tax avoidance for wealthy donors, there is no need to provide more ways for the wealthy to avoid paying their fair share for our society.

Public dollars belong in public efforts, not private pockets. Public schools have a duty to educate all children in Kansas, ensuring we have a well-educated workforce and citizens who can be responsible participants in our democracy. Private schools are NOT available to all students. They are not required to educate students with disabilities, behavior challenges, or students who underperform academically. Private schools may not even exist in rural areas of our state, meaning that this program benefits primarily those in urban areas. Private schools are not subject to oversight or accountability in how funds are spent, and may be unaccredited with uncertified teachers. Diverting public money to private schools reduces the overall quality of education that students receive in our state.

Please vote no on bill SB 87.

Kristen Sittig
Kansas City

February 5, 2025

Sylvia Spicer
802 S Highland Ave
Chanute, Kansas 66720
sylviaspicer@gmail.com
(785)-383-1772

WRITTEN PROPONENT TESTIMONY FOR SB 87

Thank you, Senate Education Committee Assistant, Cyndie for accepting my email. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 87, the low-income tax credit student scholarship bill.

My name is Sylvia Spicer and my daughters attend St. Patrick Catholic School in Chanute. The low income tax credit scholarship program has significantly helped our school and the other schools in our diocese. We feel this is a topic at hand that our state must expand. Offering young people an education opportunity in our schools has been so highly valued. The changes to this program will be even more appealing. At the end of the day, it is the child that benefits the most.

In conclusion, please support SB 87. With your support, the children in the Wichita Catholic Diocese and other private schools have the opportunity for an education that best suits their needs.

Thank you,

Sylvia Spicer
Chanute, Kansas

February 3, 2025

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Joy Smith

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

EMAIL ADDRESS: jlandgraf2@hotmail.com

BILL NUMBER: SB 87

HEARING DATE: February 6, 2025

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written-only

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

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

I am a parent of two students who currently attend our local public elementary school. Our children have flourished in their school. Due to covid restrictions and the fact that I was undergoing treatment for cancer at the time, our daughter entered kindergarten in 2021 with very little preschool and we were concerned she would fall behind. Thanks to fantastic teachers and a supportive environment she has thrived both socially and academically. Our school community is so important to us and has offered great support to us over the years.

Protection of our funding for our public schools is paramount to preserve and maintain the safe and desirable communities that we want to have in Kansas. Public schools are the cornerstones of many communities, particularly those in rural areas, and tax credits of the nature of those proposed will only serve to erode our public education system.

These tax credits ultimately divert tax dollars away from public education and result in less funding for things that have been proven to work to create strong schools. Additionally, this bill could result in private schools and home schools receiving even more tax dollars that are subject to no public oversight. Private schools may employ uncertified teachers and home schools have no curriculum requirements. I can't think of any greater disservice to our community, the state of Kansas, or our country as a whole, than passing a bill such as this which has the potential to further weaken the public school system.

There is no need for expansion of the current program as there are still hundreds of thousands of eligible students under the current guidelines. Additionally, increasing the tax credit to 100% provides special tax treatment versus those who donate to other non-profits and the current tax credit already provides a lucrative benefit to those who choose to fund private schools.

I urge you to please oppose **SB 87**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joy Smith
Overland Park, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education**NAME:** David L. Soxman**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen**EMAIL ADDRESS:** david@davidsoxman.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 a tax paying Kansas citizen who believes this bill is not in the best interests of Kansas residents, not only now but in the future. It has the potential to bring great harm to our public education system, which in most cases has been one of the top systems in the country and the reason Kansas continues to provide highly educated people to the work force, to improve living standards and provide a reliable tax base for the future. Currently the limit for tax write off of donations to private schools is 75%, which is more than sufficient. A movement to 100% would continue a dangerous process of syphoning monies away from public services. Public money should go to public schools, period! There should not be an expansion of the Tax Credit Scholarship program under any circumstances. Next, the ability for private schools to reject some students with no oversight whatsoever is also a dangerous precedent. What expectations do we have as to the quality of education provided? Are there any measurable standards by which we can monitor these entities to determine if they are providing a beneficial service? The answer is "no." Lastly, only urban areas are the beneficiaries of this "school voucher" program. Rural areas will see little to no benefit and will continue to fall behind in their education levels. We owe more to our future generations than this flawed bill!

I am asking the committee to vote "NO" on bill SB 87!

David L. Soxman

Kansas Citizen

Prairie Village, Kansas

Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Alison Stephen

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, public school parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: alisonhagman@yahoo.com

BILL NUMBER: Bill HB 87

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written

DATE OF HEARING: February 6, 2025

Chair Estes & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number HB 87. There are still plenty of students under the current guidelines who are eligible for the Tax Credit Scholarship program. There is no need to expand. In fact, expanding the program to private school students will just take limited spots from at-risk students who supposedly were the ones in need.

In 2023, only 1,340 students were participating in the current program, despite 230,000 public school students being eligible. Continuing to expand these programs will only take funding from public schools, which will be especially detrimental to rural schools.

In closing, please vote no on bill HB 87.

Alison Stephen

Kansas Citizen, Public School Parent & Supporter

Tonganoxie, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Tiffany Stepien

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, Andover High School Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: swrunningmom@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.

I am a graduate of Kansas public schools, I am a parent of a current public school student. I believe public schools have rigorous and appropriate standards of education. My daughter goes to a top 20 ranked school. I do not agree with giving taxpayer money to private schools. I do not endorse shelling out tax funding to un-accredited, un-supervised homeschool rackets or religious co-ops without any oversight. Kansas is currently ranked 19th in education. If this bill only hurts schools and cuts budgets, there is no benefit.

The evidence of school voucher programs in lowest ranking education programs of Oklahoma (ranked 49th!), do not create academic achievement. They do not support special education funding, they do not provide equitable standards or success. Vouchers literally de-fund public schools.

I firmly ask you to vote no on bill SB 87. It's not good for Kansas students.

Tiffany Stepien, MHCL

Kansas Citizen, Andover High School Parent

Andover, KS

Katherine M. Swenson
Retired Elementary Teacher
katherine.swenson.home@gmail.com
BILL NUMBER: 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.

My opposition comes from my belief in the constitutional principles of religious liberty and the separation of church and state that safeguards liberty, and the ideal of a pluralistic society, I oppose all forms of direct and indirect public aid to support sectarian private schools, including tuition tax credits or vouchers.

People of faith should be free to use their own funds to strengthen the belief system of their particular religious group. But they should not 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.

For liberty, please vote no on SB 87.

Katherine Swenson
Manhattan, Kansas

NAME: Ronald Szymankowski

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: ronaldszymankowski@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. Tax dollars should not go to private schools. Private schools lack oversight, and this leaves the public uninformed as to whether or not tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children.

This bill primarily benefits those in urban areas of the state. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Topeka, and Wichita.

Therefore, please vote no on Bill SB 87, and protect all the children of our state.

Ronald Szymankowski
Overland Park, Kansas

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Laura Stedman

TITLE: Kansas Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: allisonjstedman@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.

This is not “school choice” or “education freedom,” and Kansans have rejected similar proposals in the past. Public tax dollars belong with public schools that educate all children. Vast areas of our state do not even have private school options. In addition, strong public schools are the economic engine of Kansas cities - siphoning tax money from them will result in fewer businesses choosing to make Kansas home to their headquarters and offices. This bill creates an incentive for the wealthy and corporations to divert the money they should be paying in taxes to private schools.

Please vote NO on bill SB 87.

Laura Stedman

Kansas Parent

Overland Park

Cynthia Thompson

cindy.thomopson6@gmail.com

SB 87

Opponent

Written Testimony Only

Feb 5, 2025

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing in opposition to SB87. I am a big proponent of our public schools. Public schools educate ALL children, unlike private schools which can choose their students. I believe any money given to private schools through tax credits not only takes vital resources from public schools but benefits mostly our wealthier citizens, It also allows wealthier families to avoid paying taxes altogether, placing more of the tax burden on other families. The Tax Credit Scholarship Program is welfare for the already wealthy.

Please do not pass tSB 87..

Thank you

Cynthia Thompson

Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 87
Senate Education Committee
February 5, 2025
Alison & Adam Troutwine
Parents in Shawnee Mission School District

Chair Erickson & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our opposition to bill SB 87.

Increasing the tax credit to 100% provides special tax treatment to those who choose to donate through this program that funds private schools versus those who donate to other nonprofits. This will divert even more funds that could otherwise be used to fund public education, to subsidize private school private choices of some parents and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas.

Please vote NO on bill SB 87.

Thank you,
Alison & Adam Troutwine

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO BILL SB87 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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

EMAIL ADDRESS: JODIE.VICKERS@GMAIL.COM

ELECTED OFFICIALS: MEMBERS OF THE SB87 COMMITTEE

I APPRECIATE THE YOUR TIME TO HEAR MY OPPOSITION TO SB87

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

EXPANDING THE THE TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP VOUCHER PROGRAM CAN NOT HAPPEN. THIS WILL FURTHER DIVIDE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL KANSAS CHILDREN AND THE FUTURE OF KANSAS. A FUTURE THAT WILL BE TAKING CARE OF YOU (OR NOT TAKING CARE OF YOU IF YOU DON'T PROPERLY FUND THEIR EDUCATION.)

- THERE IS NO NEED FOR EXPANSION WHEN THERE ARE STILL HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS STILL ELIGIBLE UNDER THE CURRENT GUIDELINES WHO ARE NOT UTILIZING SCHOLARSHIPS.

THE ORIGINAL GOAL OF PROVIDING LOW-INCOME STUDENTS WITH MORE OPPORTUNITIES IS WHERE THIS PROGRAM NEEDS TO STOP.

- EXPANDING THE PROGRAM TO PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS WILL ONLY TAKE OPPORTUNITIES FROM THE VERY STUDENTS THE TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM WAS INTENDED TO HELP. INSTEAD OF EXPANDING, ACCOUNTABILITY SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE PROGRAM TO UNDERSTAND WHY THESE AT-RISK STUDENTS AREN'T RECEIVING SCHOLARSHIPS. LET'S FIX THE CURRENT PROGRAM. EXPANSION IS NOT NECESSARY OR BENEFICIAL.

KANSAS TAX DOLLARS MUST EXCLUSIVELY FUND OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND BILLS WHICH CREATE OPPORTUNITY FOR WEALTHY (AND CORPORATIONS) TO REDUCE THEIR TAX LIABILITY EVEN MORE, YEAR AFTER YEAR DOES NOT ENHANCE THE SUCCESS OF KANSAS AS A WHOLE.

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

FUND OUR SCHOOLS, FULLY!

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

ELECTED OFFICIALS VOTING IN SUPPORT OF SB87 ARE VOTING TO FURTHER UPLIFT THE PRIVILEGED POPULATION, PROMOTING THE REPUBLICAN GOAL OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE STATE OF KANSAS. DISGUSTING!

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

THIS MUST STOP. SCHOOL DISTRICTS CAN NOT OFFER ALL OF THESE SERVICES ON THEIR OWN.

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

ELIMINATING FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS WHILE VOTING TO MOVING FORWARD WITH ANY VOUCHER PROGRAM IS YOU, AS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL VOTING FOR THE DEMISE OF KANSAS EDUCATION, ALL STUDENTS IN THE STATE OF KANSAS AND THE PROGRESS AND SUCCESS OF THE FUTURE OF THE STATE.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LISTENING EARS, I AM HOPEFUL YOU WILL LISTEN TO YOUR CONSTITUENTS AND MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR ALL KANSAS CHILDREN AND VOTE AGAINST ANY CHANGE TO VOUCHERS FOR KANSAS SCHOOLS.

JODIE VICKERS, OVERLAND PARK, KS

NAME: Glenna Walker
TITLE: Kansas Tax Payer
EMAIL ADDRESS: glennaw81@outlook.com
BILL NUMBER: 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. Once again we see a bill to take money from public schools and other general fund items and direct it to private institutions. On the surface this bill appears to offer some children the opportunity to attend private schools, where it is assumed they will receive a better quality education. However, in reality this bill is a tax avoidance scheme beneficial to corporations and wealthy individuals. By labeling donations as a tax credit instead of a tax donation, it diverts money from the general fund and public schools at a much higher rate than a donations given to other causes.

In 2023, the last year data was available, only 1,340 of the 230,000 students eligible under the current Tax Credit Scholarship Voucher program participated. We do not know why this is since there is no data or accountability within the program, but quite obviously there is no need to expand the program. SB 87 would expand eligible student to include children of military members and police and fire officers. Personally, I am a veteran of the United States Army and served as a Dodge City Police Officer for ten years. Despite my personal experience I can find no logical reason why children of one career group should receive benefits another tax payer's children are not eligible for.

Also, I would point out that in my area there is only one accredited private school, which is a Catholic school so not available to non-Catholics. In sixty Kansas counties, there are no accredited private schools. Obviously rural areas would be losing tax dollars to the benefit of more urbanized areas.

Please vote no on SB 87 and provide confirmation my testimony was received and added to relevant conferee list.

Glenna Walker
Dodge City, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Timm Walker

TITLE: Kansas Republican

EMAIL ADDRESS: timmwalk@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.

Increasing the tax credit voucher is a clear attempt for people, especially wealthy people, to evade their responsibility to contribute to this state's education. It may not be obvious to supporters of this, but every Kansan benefits from a strong education for every child in Kansas. The growing movement toward education for the well-off is alarming and goes against every principle that this life-long (and publicly-educated) Kansan possesses. Every child deserves a chance to pull themselves up, and to have educational resources that can bring out the best in him or her. We have one of the strongest public education systems in the U.S. and we should be proud of that. It is tragic that some want to use their financial position (and the taxes from the rest of us) to either 1) not contribute to our state's educational system or 2) channel resources away from public schools so their child can have opportunities in education that other children (of hard working parents) can only dream of. Kansas is a state of fellowship, education, compassion, hard work and values. This bill is not.

In closing please vote no on bill SB 87.

Timm Walker

Engineer, Live Long Kansan, and Republican

Prairie Village, KS

TO: Madam Chair Senator Erickson and Members of the Senate Education Committee
FROM: Eric White, Principal, Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic School
DATE: February 6, 2025

Dear Madam Chair Erickson and Committee Members,

My name is Eric White, and I serve as the principal of Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic School in Topeka. I write to you today in strong support of SB 87, which seeks to expand the low-income tax credit scholarship program.

Currently, seven of our students benefit directly from this program. However, the impact of these scholarships reaches far beyond those individual students. Their presence enhances the richness of our school community, contributing diverse talents, perspectives, and friendships that strengthen the educational experience for all.

Our school serves a diverse population of students and families. Approximately 21% of our students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, 12% have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to support specific disabilities, and more than 25% have a CARE plan with tailored modifications to help them achieve their full potential. On a personal level, I know firsthand the difference a supportive educational environment can make—my youngest son is blind and has thrived in his Catholic elementary and high schools. Every child deserves access to an education that meets their unique needs, regardless of financial circumstances.

As advocates for social justice, we work tirelessly to make Catholic education accessible by subsidizing nearly all of our families' tuition based on need—some significantly more than others. However, despite our best efforts, we cannot meet the full financial need of every deserving family while maintaining a sustainable school program. Expanding the tax credit scholarship program would empower more families to choose the education that best serves their children.

Our schools are fully accredited by KSDE, and our teachers are highly qualified professionals who willingly earn 15-25% less than their public school counterparts because they believe in our mission. Catholic schools like ours provide an invaluable service to our community, offering families a high-quality educational choice that aligns with their values and aspirations.

I respectfully urge this committee to support SB 87. Thank you for your time, for considering this critical issue, and for your dedication to the educational needs of Kansas families.

Sincerely,
Eric White
Principal, Most Pure Heart of Mary Catholic School

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Quinn White

TITLE: Parent and KS citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: quinnwhiteis@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.

Public dollars belong to our public schools that accept and educate all children. Diverting our state general funds to private schools undermines public education funding.

Vote no on SB 87.

Quinn White

KS Citizen and Parent

Shawnee, KS

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Sherri Williams

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: mommy22ss@me.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 as someone who understands the value of our public schools to an educated society and to the vitality of our communities.

I am a product of the public school system and believe that the public schools make us better citizens and build a stronger community. The public school system gives every child a chance to learn and grow and receive an equal education to become thriving and contributing citizens of our communities and state.

I oppose this bill as there is no need for expansion when there are still hundreds of thousands of students still eligible under the current guidelines who are not utilizing scholarships. I also believe that expanding the program to private school students will only take opportunities from the very students the Tax Credit Scholarship program was intended to help. Instead of expanding, accountability should be added to the program to understand why these at-risk students aren't receiving scholarships.

Furthermore, increasing the tax credit to 100% provides special tax treatment to those who choose to donate through this program that funds private schools versus those who donate to other

nonprofits. The current tax credit of 75% already provides a lucrative benefit to those choosing to (and able) to funnel their tax dollars to private schools. Expanding the tax credit to 100% allows these taxpayers, especially the wealthy, to completely avoid paying taxes in the state Kansas. This 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 program would just essentially be welfare for the wealthy.

Public tax dollars belong with public schools

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 children and gives it to families who have made a person 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 funnel money to private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve.

No oversight or accountability

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. Currently, 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. Also, there are no controls in place to ensure those who do receive scholarships receive a quality education. Kansans expect accountability for our tax dollars.

Rural communities and students are harmed by voucher programs

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

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.

Please vote no on bill SB 87.

Sherri Williams
Leavenworth, Kansas

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Amanda Winch

TITLE: Parent, Lifelong Kansan

EMAIL ADDRESS: amanda.winch@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,

My name is Amanda Winch, and I am a lifelong Kansan with two children in public schools. My family chose to make our home in Johnson County because of its strong public school system, renowned for delivering high-quality education. Our oldest son depends on both an IEP and gifted services—critical support that ensures he receives the education he needs, just as it does for countless children across our state. I am here today to strongly oppose SB 87, which would expand the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program, diverting public tax dollars to private schools that lack oversight and can deny admission. This undermines our public schools, which are committed to providing a quality education to every child in Kansas, as is their right.

Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools—schools that accept and educate all children and are subject to oversight to ensure those funds are used appropriately. Expanding this program will only further divert taxpayer dollars to private schools that lack the same level of accountability and oversight while being allowed to deny admission for any number of reasons. We should not be expanding a program that enables taxpayer dollars to fund institutions that are not held to the same standards as public schools and that can pick and choose which students they accept.

Additionally, the Tax Credit Scholarship program disproportionately benefits families in urban areas of the state. If expanded, rural taxpayers will be subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka, without receiving any benefit themselves. This is an unfair redistribution of public funds that disadvantages rural communities.

For the sake of our children, our public schools, and the integrity of our education system, I urge you to reject SB 87. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amanda Winch

Overland Park, KS



Opponent Testimony on SB 87

AN ACT concerning education; relating to the tax credit for low income student scholarship program; expanding eligibility therefor; eliminating the eligibility requirement that students shall have been previously enrolled in public school; increasing the tax credit for contributions made to such program; providing for aggregate tax credit limit increases under certain conditions

In the Senate Education Committee

February 6, 2025

Erin Woods on behalf of Game On for Kansas Schools

Chair Erickson, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 87 on behalf of Game On for Kansas Schools, a grassroots public education advocacy organization. We oppose SB 87's increase to a 100% tax credit, its eligibility expansion and its increase in the aggregate credit limit.

100% tax credits are tax avoidance, not charity.

Calling something a scholarship allows donors to enjoy an aura of philanthropy, but donating money that is given back is not philanthropy; it's tax avoidance. This isn't even a tax deduction, it's a tax credit, and this bill expands the credit from 75% to 100%. This bill actually makes the term "donor" inappropriate. With a 100% tax credit, it is the State and remaining taxpayers that are actually handing over the money to private schools, money that would otherwise be available as part of the State General Fund. In essence, the "donors" get their donation back as they are relieved of their state taxpaying obligation, and the rest of us are now the nonconsenting funders of this program. True philanthropists are already free to donate funds to private schools for scholarships, and get the same tax deduction that others receive for donating to public schools and other charities. This 100% tax credit is an unethical tax scheme the State should not condone.

There is no valid policy reason to extend eligibility to foster children, and children of members of the military, EMS, firefighters or law enforcement officers.

If children in the new categories of this bill are in families making less than or equal to 250% of the federal poverty level, they already qualify for this program. In fact, 250% of

FPL is \$80,375 for a family of 4 and \$94,125 for a family of 5, while the median Kansas income is a little under \$70,000. A large percentage of our state is already eligible for this program. Kansans in the fields in this bill are to be commended for their choice of occupation, but if they are higher earners, they can make the same choices about how to spend their income as other Kansans do. We are concerned that this bill could be an incremental step that will be expanded during a conference committee later this session or in a future session, and that what has been a “sweetener” in the past is now in a stand-alone bill to make it easier to pass and harder to advocate against and vote against. We have been put in the less-than-ideal position of arguing against extending a so-called benefit to emotionally compelling groups. (We continue to assert that vouchers in any form actually result in lower academic results as explained further below and are not actually a benefit.) We believe that if this bill passes out of this committee, it will soon be amended, or another bill will follow that will eliminate the income cap for all Kansans. We believe the income cap should remain in effect and not eliminated for some categories of families.

Eliminating the eligibility requirement that students shall have been previously enrolled in public school and the provisions to double the aggregate credit limit will result in a massive expansion of this problematic program.

The title of the bill states that it eliminates “the eligibility requirement that students shall have been previously enrolled in public school,” and we confess some confusion whether that clause refers to everyone in the state or just those outlined in 1(d)(3)-(5). This program has continued to evolve beyond its original stated purpose of allowing some children to move out of their public school, and this would shift it further away. If it just applies to the new eligibility categories, it is an incremental step towards eliminating that requirement entirely. If it applies to all, it is a massive expansion of the program that will immediately cause every private school student to become eligible. The doubling of the aggregate credit limit shows that this bill contemplates a large increase in uptake of this program. It is notable that the increase is fueled not by encouraging private schools to accept and retain more of the over 200,000 Kansas students already eligible for this program, but by extending it to students who are from higher income levels, including those already attending private schools-the kinds of students who are less likely to require higher levels of resources. This bill continues to allow schools to participate in the program without accepting a single at-risk or Level 1 student.

This bill hands over public tax dollars without limiting “school” choice

We believe schools receiving public funds should accept and retain all students who apply, but this bill does nothing to curb “school” choice. The schools get to choose their students. The recently-passed open enrollment legislation states, “A school district shall not accept or deny a nonresident student transfer based on ethnicity, national origin, gender, income level, disabling condition, proficiency in the English language, measure of achievement, aptitude or athletic ability.” That same language has never been added to the tax credit scholarship program.

We were given a typical application for a current Qualified Participating School. It requires

- Baptismal and First Communion Certificate
- last report card
- IEP/ILP documentation
- number of years family has belonged to parish and degree of participation in the Stewardship Way of Life
- successful completion by the student of a screening assessment.

The application notes that submission of documents does not guarantee admission, that in submitting an application the parents agree to the school’s testing procedures and explicitly states the school reserves the right to refuse admittance to any student whose academic needs and behavioral needs are greater than the school can accommodate.

As written, this bill will likely be used by private schools to choose students who are easier and less expensive to teach, leaving the most challenging students to the public schools and leaving less funding to educate those students. On Monday, January 30th, 2023 the K-12 Education Budget Committee heard from a conferee representing The Independent School in Wichita who stated that his school does not accept students more than one or two levels behind in reading. Additionally, in a hearing on a similar bill in a prior session, one of the conferees admitted that the private schools he worked with counseled out high school students who were not academically successful. They send those students back to the public schools. As private schools, they have the right to recruit athletes, to choose not to accept students who don’t have the same religious beliefs or academic backgrounds as their other students, and to send children back to their local public school if they don’t want to keep them, but we vehemently dispute their ability to retain those rights when they accept public funds. **With a 100% tax credit, it can no longer be argued that these are not public tax dollars.**

This program puts students at risk.

In addition to failing to tailor this program to its stated goals, there have been no successful attempts to add provisions to ensure that our most vulnerable students get an adequate education. The voucher/tax credit scholarship experiment has been underway for decades in other cities and states, and research shows that these programs lead to **decreases in student performance**. There is also substantial research documenting ways in which private schools utilizing vouchers in other states have shown a lack of oversight, higher attrition rates, fiscal mismanagement, fraud and a lack of adequate academic services. Recent research shows that voucher programs cause Hurricane Katrina and COVID sized learning losses. As taxpayers and parents, we find the complete lack of oversight in this program troubling. This bill could but does not

- Require schools be accredited under KESA
- Require schools to have legitimate curriculum
- Require schools to have adequate and safe facilities
- Require schools to include music, art, or physical education
- Require schools to provide lunch or transportation
- Prohibit discrimination by schools
- Require schools to participate in state testing
- Require schools to track or report academic progress of students using the program
- Require schools to publicly report their finances and curricula.

Voucher advocates sometimes claim that there is no need for oversight because parents won't leave their children in an inadequate private school. Voucher programs in other states show us that is not the case. The reality is that parents often lack information needed to make informed choices, and bills like this do not require the collection or reporting of that information. Parents who find their voucher school inadequate also might want to avoid the trauma of moving schools again. (Research shows that changing schools is, in fact, a traumatic experience for students.) They also might choose a school for reasons other than academics. These choices become more problematic when that choice is being funded by public tax dollars. Under this bill, a student could use a tax credit scholarship to leave a high-performing public school and pay tuition to a lower-performing private school. Tax credits should not be used for such purposes. School choice exists in Kansas, but public subsidies should not be used for inferior educational options.

This program is a religious school subsidy program.

This program might better be titled the “religious school system subsidy program.”

Though we often hear the trope that we should fund students, not systems, the vast majority of the private schools that receive “scholarship” funding are part of religious school systems. Many of them are supported by institutions with extensive fundraising ability. Of the schools signed up to participate in the program, only a few are not religiously affiliated. All of the largest Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs) are religiously affiliated. SGOs can retain up to ten percent of the funding they receive, so they are also being subsidized by this program. Most of them are also clustered in the Kansas City, Wichita and Topeka metro areas. Rural communities are subsidizing vouchers for families in the cities.

It defies logic to tell our public schools they must be efficient and minimize administration and then allow the diversion of public dollars to schools in a separate system, with their own buildings and administrators. We urge you to oppose SB 87.

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Erin Woods

TITLE: private citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: ewoods999@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,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my opposition to bill SB 87. My reasons are many and I hope you will take the time to consider each of them.

Expansion continues to be unnecessary

The original intent of this program was to help low income (at-risk) kids attending the 100 lowest performing schools. Yet, with each expansion, more and more of the at-risk students get left behind as private schools have a bigger pool of students to choose from. The at-risk kids who would require more resources from private schools can be skipped over in favor of kids with fewer challenges.

There are more than 235,000 free and reduced lunch students eligible for the program and \$6 million in available scholarships. Please put your focus back on these students. Opening the program up to more students and allowing for an increase in the cap is not necessary.

Program lacks data and accountability

Any changes to the Tax Credit Scholarship program should include data collection and reporting requirements to increase accountability and transparency for Kansas tax dollars. Such as:

- Number of students who were eligible and applied for a scholarship vs. number of students utilizing a scholarship. We know private schools are allowed to deny admission for a host of reasons. Were some of these 235,000 at-risk students denied admission?
- Retention rates in the program by income level. Are at-risk students with more challenges returning to public school because they weren't finding success at a private school or because they were counseled out?
- Measures of success for students participating in the program by income level — standardized test scores, graduation rates, post-secondary success. Are we seeing the benefits from this program that were promised? Are there some private schools with lower performance? Should they remain in the program?

Kansans expect their tax dollars to be used effectively. If our tax dollars are being diverted to a private entity, we should expect some oversight and transparency.

100% tax credit is egregious, is tax avoidance, and benefits the wealthy & corporations

Kansans who make contributions to private schools should not receive preferential treatment over Kansans who donate to charitable organizations. The current 75% tax credit (which was expanded from

70%) is lucrative enough. A 100% tax credit allows taxpayers to essentially make donations for free and is pure tax avoidance. Considering the \$500,000 contribution limit (that can be carried forward to future years), the benefits to corporations and wealthy Kansans are immense and an expansion to 100% is egregious.

This increase would just incentivize more taxpayers to contribute to this program resulting in continued decreases to the state general fund that is used to fund our public schools and other public goods like our roads and bridges. All Kansans should be contributing to the good of our state.

Please vote no on SB 87

This bill is simply a voucher program in disguise and one that is more egregious than most. Not only does it divert public tax dollars to private schools via these lucrative tax credits, but the benefits to wealthy Kansans outweigh the benefits to the students this program was intended to support. Choosing to send your child to a private school shouldn't be subsidized by the state and choosing to donate to a private school should not be subsidized by the state in a manner that is more beneficial than other charitable donations.

Thank you,

Erin Woods
Leawood

Bill SB 87 Opposition Testimony, written Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education

February 5, 2025

From Cassandra Woolworth

306 N Pinon St, Olathe, KS 66061

CassieWoolworth@Gmail.com

Parent/Citizen in the Olathe School District 233

Chair Erickson & Members of the Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill number SB 87. Let me say again, I graduated from the Olathe Public School system; I had children graduate from the Olathe Public School System, and am planning on having grandkids go to the Olathe Public School System. I have seen the extensive data that shows Vouchers KILL public schools*. Public money should go to Public Schools. Period.

Public dollars spent need to be measured. All schools across Kansas should have the SAME standards – but not ‘no standards’ which are often at Voucher schools. Our tax dollars should not go to private and homeschools that lack oversight, leaving the public uninformed as to whether or not our tax dollars are really being spent to improve the lives of children.

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

Vouchers like this tax credit program do not provide real choice. Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public-school resources are drained and students in rural areas lack little to no private options. These tax credits will primarily benefit those in urban areas of our state. Rural taxpayers will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas such as Johnson County, Wichita, and Topeka.

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

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

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NAME: Elizabeth Wright

TITLE: Kansas Citizen, Parent, Licensed Social Worker

EMAIL ADDRESS: lizzienwright@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 have been a part of the Shawnee Mission public school system since the 90s, and I am incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to be a “public school kid.” I was raised in a truly diverse elementary school, and that experience shaped my deep appreciation for public education and its accessibility to every child.

I value the fact that my child will sit alongside peers from different backgrounds—children of various ethnicities, cultures, and income levels. I understand the hard work public school teachers and administrators put into creating a caring, safe environment for every child who walks through their doors. Soon, I’ll have two children attending public school, and I want them to experience the same inclusive, supportive education I received.

I am especially proud that my children will attend Comanche Elementary in Overland Park, a Title 1 school that offers a mobile food pantry every month to families in need. I believe all children deserve access to a free, equitable education, no matter their circumstances.

Therefore, I am respectfully asking you to vote NO on bill SB 87.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Nicole Wright

Licensed Masters Social Worker

7531 Eby Ave

Overland Park, KS 66204

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education**NAME:** Karen Wycoff**TITLE:** Kansas Citizen**EMAIL ADDRESS:** kewycoff13@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 resident who understands the importance of public education to our community and our nation. Both of my sons attended public schools and are successful in their current careers due to the education they received at their public schools. Expanding the Tax Credit Scholarship program will divert even more funds that could otherwise be used to improve public education for all, to subsidize the private choices of some parents and allow donors to avoid paying taxes in Kansas. The tax dollars given would be given to private schools with no oversight to verify if the funds being spent are actually improving the outcomes for the students they serve. Just as you expect accountability for the money you budget as a state senator, so do I as a person who pays taxes in this state. Also, private schools have the option of deciding which students they will educate, whereas public schools have a duty and are expected to meet the needs of all the students that walk through their doors. 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.

I urge you to vote no on bill SB 87]

Karen Wycoff
Baldwin City