

23 January 2023

Written Testimony to the House Committee on K-12 Education Budget

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**Bill 2060 WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY**

Dear Chair Williams and Members of the Committee:

Please accept this testimony in opposition to Bill 2060, which establishes a taskforce concerning the funding of Special Education.

Special Education, as you know, is a federally mandated program, but you may be unaware that the goals of Special Education programs are directly crucial to the effective functioning of our local communities and their economic health. Those goals are: Equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and the extremely important goal of economic self-sufficiency.<sup>1</sup>

Currently our Special Education programs are only partially funded despite our own State requirements to the contrary, requiring local school districts to make painful and extensive budget adjustments. To attempt to defund these programs further through legislative action will only negatively impact the programs without offering students, their families or our local communities any alternative.

The result of diminishing funds for their education will deprive these students of the opportunity to become economically self sufficient or to make a meaningful contribution to our communities. Our grocery store employees, greeters, sackers, stockers and the innumerable other hardworking individuals who make their homes in our communities will be denied the necessary training and supervision they need to become the fully empowered members of society.

I am certain this is not the outcome you are seeking, and I know you are all working hard to make sure that our state budget stays within the limitations of our available funds. Attempting to restructure Special Education funding, however, ignores the very real, crippling impact this move will have on local economies by consigning individuals with disabilities to be warehoused and idle rather than active and contributing workers. Restructuring the funding is a short sighted approach to the task prudent budgeting and will cost us far more dollars than we save, in the long run. Thank you for your unstinting work for the people of Kansas, and thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.

Please do not vote for HB 2060.

Joan Gilson, PhD, Olathe, KS 66062

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<sup>1</sup> "A Quality of Life Framework for Special Education Outcomes." (2003 Apr.) Turbull III, Rutherford H.; Turnbull, Ann; Park, Jiyeon ; Wehmeyer, Michael Remedial and Special Education