

Proponent Testimony to the House K – 12 Education Committee of the State of Kansas on HB 2048

Rayna Gray

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Good afternoon distinguished ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for this opportunity to spend just a few minutes with you sharing my support for the Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program. I must admit I am nervous to be here in front of you. I'd ask for your patience as I share my story.

My name is Rayna Grey. I am the mother of Langston Grey, a first grader at Holy Savior Catholic Academy in Wichita, KS. This is Langston's first year at Holy Savior and he is the recipient of a scholarship through this program.

I am not Catholic, but ironically attended Holy Savior in Kindergarten only. I grew up in Christian home and knew that I wanted that to send my son to a school that shared my Christian values. I am a single mother and as the time approached for him to start school, I knew that I would be unable to afford tuition at any private school. I enrolled him in kindergarten at a public school, but after encouragement from my mother to look at options, I set up an appointment with Dr. Shropshire at Holy Savior.

Now I must tell you that this was a hard thing to do. I am not one to accept handouts or charity from others. It's not like I couldn't use some help as a single mother, but I just remember my father raising me to be independent. It's probably a little bit of pride also. But I decided to put all that aside and meet with Holy Savior.

Dr. Shropshire told me about this program that, if I met the guidelines, would pay for the tuition for Langston to attend Holy Savior and that it was a “scholarship”. In my mind, this was easier to consider than a simple handout. Maybe there is not much of a difference, but for me this was meaningful.

I just wanted the best possible education for my son. He is a good kid, with a huge heart and I knew that what would be best for him would be to receive an education in a setting where faith, education, values and God were completely intertwined. I found this at Holy Savior Catholic Academy.

While it has only been nearly 5 months, I can tell you already that I’ve seen a change in Langston. He is growing in his faith, responding to other kids and even adults to share his faith and is getting tremendous marks academically in school. He has grown in grace and patience in dealing with his peers.

Holy Savior is a safe place for Langston to be. I am not saying that other public schools are not safe, and actually I once was employed by USD 259 as a para in the classroom. But at Holy Savior, I know that Langston can go to anyone in the entire school, teachers or staff, and get help if he needs something. He is embraced by his peers, of course as much as any kid today is embraced by his peers. I know without a doubt that Holy Savior will provide the very best education and spiritual support for my son, and also for me.

That’s because, as Langston started school in August 2022, I also started working as a para for grade 3 at Holy Savior. So I get to first hand see the tremendous value that my son and many others are receiving at Holy Savior.

Thank you for the support of this program. It has provided me with the opportunity to send my son to a school that I know will be best for him. Best for him to be a faith-filled, God fearing and productive member of our society. Anything that you are considering now to expand the program would only serve to allow more support by so many generous donors and allow more families to entertain the very best option for their child's education.