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House K-12 Education Budget Committee

House Bill 2347

February 20, 2017

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you once again for the opportunity to appear before you today.

We stand in opposition to House Bill 2347.

For the first 24 sections or 16 and one half pages of this 112 page bill, it does sound like a school finance formula bill and there are even a few such sections later on, but the bulk of this bill is devoted to rolling together every policy proposal that has failed in the legislature over the past decade.

The bill does include a kind of base state aid per pupil tied to the enrollment of the school district which one assumes is intended to address the loss of low-enrollment weighting. It includes a poverty calculation and bilingual aid. It also includes an inflation factor going forward. But those are the only four factors I have found in the bill that address the issues I have raised in our testimony on HB 2270 and HB 2324.

Among the provisions that are simply policies that failed to either come out of committee or pass on the floor are:

- Prohibiting state funds from being used for extracurricular activities and a form of the local activities budget,
- A state panel to approve school district bond initiatives that might receive state aid,
- Prohibiting capital outlay aid to be spent on areas not designated for direct instruction,
- Opt-in requirements for sex education,
- The state-wide health benefits plan and shifting the cost for benefits to employees,
- School vouchers (the "Kansas Education Freedom Act") including funding schools that do not meet state accreditation standards,
- Dramatic expansion of the corporate tuition tax credits and an additional personal tuition tax credit.

There is another push towards mandatory school district consolidation, a public school grading system, and state-wide personnel evaluation system, an "efficiency fund" that gives schools more money for being more efficient, and amendments to the selection of the three judge panel for school funding issues.

HB 2347 is less a school finance bill than it is a Frankenstein of sewn together policies that have repeatedly failed to pass in either a committee or on the floor.

We would suggest that you focus your efforts on a school finance formula and not rehash other issues that are either unrelated to funding or have repeatedly failed to garner support.

Again we urge this committee to utilize House Bills 2270 and 2324 as the framework for your discussion going forward.