



Dr. Martin Stessman, Superintendent  
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Dr. Kristin O'Brien, Special Education Director  
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## Testimony on HB 2166

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee:

My name is Dr. Martin Stessman and I am the superintendent of Shawnee Heights USD 450.

I stand before you today in conflicted opposition to House Bill 2166. I want you to know that I personally believe every student should graduate with an understanding of personal finance, saving and investing, credit and debt and employment benefits. Currently, we embed various principals of personal finance in required courses at the middle school and during a student's freshman year of high school. In addition to this, we currently offer a personal finance course as a high school elective.

### **Impact on Staffing**

HB 2166 as written presents a number of challenges. First among those challenges are staffing concerns. We currently offer three sections of personal finance. Making it a requirement for graduation at Shawnee Heights High School would require us to offer 12 sections and either eliminate 9 sections of other business courses or hire a full-time teacher. We could hire another teacher for the department, which would not only be an added expense but also nearly impossible to do for schools statewide because the demand for qualified business teachers currently exceeds supply. We know because we have hired three business teachers during the last four years.

### **Impact on electives**

Our biggest concern regarding electives would be losing course offerings within the business department. If current staffing remained the same, we would lose over half of our business department course offerings in order to teach Personal Finance in a traditional classroom format. That would be devastating to the students who take those courses for their intended field of study after high school. In addition, this bill would remove the choice of an elective for students. It would shift those students from other classes into personal finance and impact the number of electives available for all students. Electives are often used to gain more rigor in an area of interest or career path not part of graduation requirements. These include Advance Placement and dual credit courses.

### **Impact on Washburn Institute of Technology Students**

In addition to creating staffing concerns, HB 2166 would negatively impact scheduling for our Washburn Institute of Technology students. Currently, those students use all of their electives to attend Washburn Tech. Most do this during their junior and senior years. Their schedules usually look like this:

Junior year: Washburn Tech Junior English, Math III, U.S. History

Senior year: Washburn Tech, Senior English, Government (1 semester), Social Studies elective for graduation requirement (1 semester), Science. If Personal Finance is a required class for seniors next year, students would be forced to take a summer or online course outside of the regular school experience in order to be able to attend Washburn Tech.

The last point I wish to make is that we have completed pre-enrollment for next year and are building a schedule based on current graduation requirements and student interest in electives.

Because of that, and the additional hardships referenced above, many schools would be forced to offer the course online, outside the school day and setting. We have explored online options in the past and have not been satisfied with the quality of the courses we have investigated. It is highly likely the desired impact of the bill would be diluted and it would not achieve its intended outcome.

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