



Date of Testimony: February 2, 2021

Bill Number: HB 2119

Testimony by: Megan Peters, Chair - Education First Shawnee Mission

In Opposition Testimony: Written Only

Dear Chair Representative Williams and Members of the House K-12 Education Budget Committee:

I am writing to voice **my opposition for HB 2119**, which includes provisions to move dollars intended for our public schools to voucher programs. As Chair of Education First Shawnee Mission (EFSM), a parent-led education advocacy group in the Shawnee Mission School District, I am strongly against using tax revenue designated for our public schools for privatization. EFSM opposes vouchers in any form, but we are particularly frustrated by this bill, which would create education savings accounts diverting funds from our public schools to fund private school tuition for students who attended schools that were in hybrid or remote learning modes at any time this year or last. Hybrid or remote learning modes were based on county health department determination in the midst of a pandemic and should not be leveraged as a political tool to attack the viability of our public schools. Therefore, it should not be considered.

In addition, HB 2119 lacks accountability and transparency for how the public funds are used at any private accredited, nonaccredited, or unregulated homeschool. This lack of accountability could very well result in funds being diverted from public schools to private schools that are also in hybrid or remote learning modes. If the main concern of opponents of the bill is the mode in which learning takes place then this bill completely fails to remedy that. The lack of accountability extends to student success as well. There would be no accountability for the private schools receiving the funds to ensure that students were excelling in their state government funded private education.

Kansas has always been a place where we value the education of our children. This bill was written without accountability to ensure student success, without a remedy to the supposed learning mode issues, and would divert state education funds which are already stressed in the economic impact of the pandemic. We encourage members of the committee to commit to transparency in governance and reconsider support for this bill.

As a parent and a Kansan, I am firmly in opposition to HB 2119 and I ask you to oppose this bill as well. I encourage you to focus on doing the job that the Kansas taxpayers have selected you to do...fund our schools and stop playing political games with our children's education.

Regards,

Megan Peters - Parent and Chair, Education First Shawnee Mission

Overland Park, Kansas - educationfirstshawneemission@gmail.com