

Committee on K-12 Education Budget
Rep. Williams, Chair
Members of the Committee

RE: HB2550

Committee Members,

I am currently unable to travel to Topeka and want to submit my written testimony regarding opposition to the bill introduced just 7 days ago and already scheduled for a hearing.

I am opposed to the use of public funds to pay for private education. This type of program is nothing more than laundering public funds by paying parents instead of the schools. My tax dollars will eventually be paid directly to private schools. You can call the programs tax credit, school vouchers or school choice, but they are just a label to conceal the fact that using these types of plans allows the private schools, most of which are religious institutions, to choose who will attend and to promote religious ideology.

The private schools would be using taxpayer dollars according to the individual policies of the private school boards that are not elected officials or and are not held publicly accountable.

This bill would divert the already poorly funded public schools to private schools that are not held to the same standards. Our schools must meet stringent educational standards and provide services to a wide range of physical and emotional support, especially for student with disabilities.

I am not opposed to religious education. Parents are welcome to choose to send their children to these institutions if they believe their religious instruction is not adequate at home or their church. However, they should not be allowed to divert funding from the public school system that supports all students and is held to a much higher education standard and accountability. These institutions want government funding but not government standards or oversight.

As the grandparent of a special needs child, I see the daily struggles for teachers and students to maintain high standards of quality education and services for all students. Rerouting funding to private schools leaves our vulnerable even more at risk.

I do not support any legislation that weakens our public school system.

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