

**Testimony in opposition of:**

**House Bill 2662: AN ACT concerning education; relating to schools and school districts; establishing the parents' bill of rights and academic transparency act**

**Submitted by:  
Richard Martinez  
Topeka, KS**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Richard Martinez and I am a lifelong resident of Topeka. My wife and I have four children. Our first 3 attended parochial grade school and high school in Topeka and our youngest daughter, Grace, attended Topeka Public Schools.

First, I would like to share my personal story regarding my children. While I believe that the parochial schools that my first 3 children attended provided an excellent education, parochial school tended to have a “take it or leave it” approach on what was taught our kids. That is what we expected, and we all conformed to their requirements. My youngest daughter attended Topeka Public Schools, and our experience was wonderful. Because we were actively involved parents in her education, we knew in advance of her lesson plans, her textbooks, and the subjects covered in class. We could easily access all those materials. No law was required to make this happen. What we did not know nor could anticipate was class discussion. Discussion frequently raised by other students.

If there was a topic that we did not want our daughter exposed to, we worked with the teacher to allow her library time that day it was covered. It was that simple. I would never dream of subjecting the entire classroom, and the entire district to my personal moral standards. By the way, Topeka Public Schools maintains very high and excellent standards and expectations among its students. HB 2662 will only add burden, expense, and confusion among parents. It is one of the most confusing and unclear bills I have ever read. I also believe it represents a small minority of parent’s wants, not needs. It’s a bit disingenuous to think that a law is needed to address something that already exists.

I also find HB 2662 overly broad. The list of requirements is exhaustive and will only prohibit spontaneous discussion in the classroom. My daughter’s classes were extremely diverse and included students of all races, creeds, religious affiliations and lifestyles. Teachers are there to teach and guide students. They should not have to worry that spontaneous discussion that some will consider a violation of this bill. That simply is not fair.

One of my more conservative friends once told me that he is NOT in favor of “more government” because that will just mess everything up. That view seems to apply perfectly to this bill.

I also did not see any funding in the bill for schools to pay for the portal development, implementation, and maintenance. That is a huge gap that must be addressed if this bill progresses as they will need to hire staff to support a portal. There was also no fiscal note included with the bill. That is not acceptable.

**I urge you to oppose HB 2662 based on my comments above. Please reach out to me with any questions. Thank you for your time today.**