

HB2550  
OPPONENT TESTIMONY  
Written Only

Chair Williams and members of the committee,

My name is Colleen Cunningham. I am writing today as a former special education teacher who completed PhD coursework in Educational Policy and Leadership Studies, as well as a mom of three elementary students. I am writing in opposition to HB2550.

I oppose this bill for many reasons. I do not support taxpayer funds being diverted to support private schools. Private schools do not have the same standards for accountability as public schools, both in terms of successfully teaching content, as well as in teaching all students. If this bill passes, it will effectively use taxpayer dollars to create a two-tier education system, which may benefit a few students, but which will defund the only available education for the majority of students.

I'd like to add that, in studying the history of public education as part of my PhD program, we learned that for rural communities in particular, the public school was the hub of the community. It provided education, but also socialization, work opportunities, improved property values, and so on. When rural public schools consolidate and close, that hub is removed, and often the families, the jobs, and other benefits of the schools are lost with that. This bill would speed up that process, and, in all likelihood, in rural areas there will not be private education opportunities to replace what is lost.

In closing, I'd just like to reiterate that I strongly oppose HB2550.

Thank you for your time.

Colleen Cunningham  
Overland Park, KS