

SB 128

Neutral testimony

Christian Home Education Coalition of Kansas

February 9, 2023

Chair Tyson and members of the committee,

My name is Jennifer Laporte and I am a leader in the homeschool community in my local area of Kansas City, and the chair of the statewide homeschooling association, Christian Home Education Coalition of Kansas.

I started homeschooling my first elementary school student in the fall of 2002, and I am currently in the middle of homeschooling my last elementary school student. When our homeschool journey began, money was so tight, that the only books I could afford to learn about homeschooling, were those I checked out from the library. We knew from the outset that a commitment to provide a competent, private education for our children would involve many sacrifices and we were and are willing to make those sacrifices.

Homeschooling will never be easy, and despite limited finances, we have always done what was necessary to make it possible. The homeschool community has been forged in the fire of mutual commitment and sacrifice and I am grateful to be a part of such a strong and caring community. In this community, we support each other in multiple ways, including local and national charitable organizations who provide grants to homeschool families facing financial challenges.

I commend the committee on seeking alternate approaches to making educational options more affordable to KS families. This tax credit approach will likely attract less animosity and suspicion than the direct giving of educational funding, and by its format, result in less risk for increased regulation and potential loss of educational freedom for families.

In this bill, Section 1, (2) (b) states: "If the amount of the tax credit allowed by this section exceeds the taxpayer's income tax liability imposed under the Kansas income tax act for such tax year, the excess amount shall be refunded to the taxpayer."

We are concerned that the amount of money a typical homeschool family would be allowed by this tax credit could be quite in excess of both the tax liability and the expenses to provide a competent, private education directed by a parent. Amounts vary, depending on the source, but average homeschool costs are said to range from \$250 to \$2000 per child, with costs lowering when using curriculum and books for multiple children. As Kansas citizens, we desire to be wise stewards of resources and funds. Homeschoolers educate as nonaccredited private schools, and we request that you remove nonaccredited private schools from this bill.

For Section 1, (d) (2) which states, "By making a claim for the ad astra opportunity tax credit, the taxpayer acknowledges that the department of revenue may consult with and receive

information from the department of education regarding the enrollment status of any dependent child for which the tax credit is being claimed,” we would make the suggestion to add “in a public school” after enrollment status to mirror the language of (d) (1). This will prevent confusion for the taxpayer about what information is being received.

As a homeschool parent and an advocate for homeschool freedom, we again thank the committee for their efforts, but respectfully ask to be removed from this bill. As a community, we will continue to support each other in making homeschooling possible for the committed, sacrificial parents who choose this educational option.