



To the Kansas House Higher Education Budget Committee:

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Strengthen Families Rebuild Hope coalition in **opposition to House Bill 2643**.

Strengthen Families Rebuild Hope is a coalition of youth, families, and independent advocacy organizations who came together to speak up about our state's current foster care crisis in order to help rebuild the promise that every kid has a safe home, a healthy family, and a bright future. More information about our coalition is available online at www.RebuildHopeKansas.org.

We are deeply concerned by House Bill 2643's effect of pitting one group of young people against another. As people who care passionately about youth who have been in the foster care system, we find it counterproductive and problematic that House Bill 2643 seems to use these youth as political cover for efforts to deny access to higher education for other Kansas high school students. Kansas's full support for youth who have been in our foster care system should be adamant and resolute – not based on the denial of support to other youth.

As this committee has heard from the Kansas Board of Regents and others, House Bill 2643 is unlikely to provide any additional funding for youth who have been in foster care in our state, and may, in fact, lose our state – and our youth – money.

Sincerely,

The Strengthen Families Rebuild Hope Steering Committee