



Date of Testimony: March 13, 2019

Bill Number: HB 2395

Testimony by: Megan Peters, Chair - Education First Shawnee Mission

In Opposition Testimony: Written Only

Dear Chair Representative Williams and Members of the House K-12 Education Budget Committee:

I am writing to voice **my opposition for HB 2395**, which includes provisions to move dollars intended for our public schools to voucher programs. As Chair of Education First Shawnee Mission (EFSM), a parent-led education advocacy group in the Shawnee Mission School District, I am strongly against using tax revenue designated for our public schools for privatization. EFSM opposes vouchers in any form, but we are particularly frustrated by this bill, which will provide vouchers to parents who claim their children were bullied. This sets a dangerous precedent in several areas, as no proof of bullying is required to qualify for the vouchers AND it puts the onus on the bullied child to leave school, as opposed to the disciplining bullies themselves. In addition, this voucher program disproportionately affects rural children, who will not have the option to attend another school, unlike those living in urban or suburban areas. Diverting much needed funds from our public schools will not help all Kansans, only the ones that have the means and access to attend a private school. Therefore, it should not be considered.

In addition, HB 2395 would reduce school base funding per student to levels that are beneath what has already been deemed inadequate by the Kansas Supreme Court. After years of litigation, we encourage the committee to stop playing games with our children's education and simply fund our schools! Passing HB 2395 would lead to continuing the endless cycle of litigation, which is unfair to Kansas teachers and children. We moved to Kansas when my child was three-years-old because we had heard amazing things about Kansas schools. However, my 7<sup>th</sup> grader's entire educational career in this state has taken place under inadequate funding. She, and all Kansas kids, deserve better.

Kansas has always been a place where we value the education of our children, and I'm proud to have moved back home to Kansas because I knew it was the best place for me to educate my own kids. However, I have been disappointed with the Kansas Legislature's blatant disregard for the children of Kansas and the use of their education as a pawn in political games. The very fact that this bill was put on the committee schedule with almost no notice, during a week where most Kansas parents are on spring break with their children, therefore unable to submit testimony, shows exactly how the leadership of this committee regards its constituents. We encourage members of the committee to commit to transparency in governance and reconsider such tactics when pushing bills that will affect so many communities.

**As a parent and a Kansan, I am firmly in opposition to HB 2395 and I ask you to oppose this bill as well.** I encourage you to focus on doing the job that the Kansas taxpayers have selected you to do...fund our schools and stop playing political games with our children's education.

Regards,

Megan Peters - Parent and Chair, Education First Shawnee Mission

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