

Date of Testimony: February 6, 2018

Bill Number: SB 44

Testimony by: Megan Peters

In Support Testimony: Written Only

Dear Chair Molly Baumgardner and Members of the Senate Select Committee on Education Finance:

I am writing to voice my support for SB 44, which includes appropriations for the Department of Education for FY 2019, 2020 and 2021; increasing BASE aid for certain school years; continuing the \$20 million statewide levy for schools and excepting a certain portion of property used for residential purposes from such levy. 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. We must fully fund our public schools in order to ensure we will be able to invest in our children and our state's future. We cannot afford *not* to educate our children.

As a parent of an elementary and middle school student in the Shawnee Mission School District and Chair of Education First Shawnee Mission, a parent-led public education advocacy group, I have seen firsthand the damage that has been done to our schools due to lack of steady funding. In our district alone, the reserve fund has been depleted, class sizes have grown, programs have been cut, and staff have been reduced to deal with state budget austerity measures. Digging ourselves out of this hole is difficult work, but as a Kansas parent and constituent, I expect our legislators to grab a shovel and do the work. It should not be up to teachers and parent-led PTAs to raise funding to ensure our students are receiving what they need and deserve. I have been a parent at a Title 1 school for over 8 years and watching the most vulnerable Kansas children continue to be left behind due to funding pitfalls is what spurred me to education advocacy. We must do better for our kids and all Kansas kids.

As a parent and a Kansan, I am firmly in support of SB 44 and I encourage you to support this bill as well. Please 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. The future of Kansas depends on it.

Regards,

Megan Peters

Parent and Chair, Education First Shawnee Mission

Overland Park, Kansas

msspeters@gmail.com