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House K-12 Education Budget Committee  
Chair, Rep. Kristey Williams  
Hearing: February 4, 2021

Position – OPPOSE HB 2119

Chair Williams, and Members of the Committee,

The Mainstream Coalition opposes HB 2119, distributing public money to private schools.

The right to a suitable education is guaranteed by the Kansas Constitution to any Kansas child. This is accomplished by providing a system of public education that is available to every Kansas child, regardless of income, geography, ability, race, or any other factor.

Private education is an option for those students whose circumstances allow it. But private educational institutions in Kansas are not held to the same standards of performance, reporting, accessibility, or non-discrimination as public schools.

This bill is a transparent attempt to fund private educational institutions with public tax money. And yet, the State cannot *guarantee* that students at those institutions will receive a suitable education. The State *can* work to guarantee the education available in public schools, through this Legislature, the Kansas Department of Education, and the Kansas State Board of Education.

This is the crux of why public money should not fund private schools.

If, as some legislators have suggested, the public schools are “failing” some students, then it is within the power of the State to fix that. We would suggest adding more funding for public education, not less, as a place to start.

We ask you to please oppose passage of HB 2119.

Thank you,

Michael Poppa  
Executive Director of the Mainstream Coalition  
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Founded in 1993, the Mainstream Coalition is a nonpartisan nonprofit that advocates for common sense public policy in Kansas. Our members do more than vote.