

Dear The K-12 Budget Chair and Members -

My name is Erin Zehner, my child Aalon, will be attending Overland Park Elementary this fall as a kindergartener.

In 2020 I felt so blessed that my children were still in daycare, and had a safe place to grow, learn and play while my husband and I were (thankfully) working. But, even with the possibility of another remote year in 2021, I KNOW it's temporary and I am willing to make the sacrifice - for my child, his friends and all children in our community - because public education is worth it.

Reasons Bill HB2119 should NOT be passed:

- **Harmful long-term solution to a short term problem** - Yes, students (especially with disabilities) that need extra in-person help during this time and should absolutely get that. But creating legislation that has such a long-lasting impact to Kansas Public School funding is not the right solution. Again this is a temporary pandemic - so there needs to be a bridge solution to get those students support. Or it risks their long-term educational opportunities, and all other future student's, like my son.

- **Support rural communities** - though I live in OP, I know there are many Kansans that live in rural/low income communities that simply don't have a private option. Funding for their education would be directly affected. Meaning our government would literally be deprioritizing Kansas Children's education and push us backwards.

- **Lack of oversight/proper use of funding** - Private schools cannot be appropriately monitored or held accountable for the public dollars that they use. That is unacceptable and a misuse of taxpayers dollars.

- **Doesn't guarantee affordability, even with a voucher** - Even if this passed, it would not guarantee that private schools would still be affordable for families - right now, not to mention in the long-term.

- **Economic Development** - a strong public education system is a factor in economic growth for Kansas. Ensuring Kansans have quality, affordable education means we are more attractive to businesses/people wanting to live here. Yes, that is more long-term, but it's still an important factor in this decision.

- **Promote diversity and inclusion** - Public schools allow so much diversity that private schools tend to "weed out" due to cost and location. Private schools are allowed to actively discriminate "within the rules".

Public safety during trying times - The pandemic is temporary. Public schools should not be punished for doing remote learning for the health of our community. Pure and simple. We are almost at the end...we are *this close*.

Find an alternative solution to helping those families that need an in-person option. Please do not pass Bill HB2119.

Thank you and please feel free to contact me with any questions.

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