

January 31, 2022

Written: Opposition of HB 2550

AN ACT concerning education; creating the student empowerment act; authorizing the establishment of education savings accounts for certain students to attend private schools of their choice; amending K.S.A. 72-5134 and K.S.A. 2021 Supp. 79-32,117 and repealing the existing sections; also repealing K.S.A. 2021 Supp. 79-32,117q.

Members of the House Committee on K-12 Budget Committee,

I urge the members of this committee and the Kansas Legislative body to **oppose** HB 2550 as introduced on January 25, 2022.

Valley Center School District is located north of Wichita, Kansas. We serve students from portions of the Kechi, Park City, and Wichita communities and all of Valley Center and surrounding rural areas. The district's enrollment is currently greater than 3,100 students.

In order to be considered a state, the founders of our great nation required that each State's constitution addresses education. Article 6 of the Kansas Constitution reads,

*§ 1. Schools and related institutions and activities. The legislature shall provide for intellectual, educational, vocational and scientific improvement by establishing and maintaining **public schools**, educational institutions and related activities which may be organized and changed in such manner as may be provided by law. History: Adopted by convention, July 29, 1859; ratified by electors, Oct. 4, 1859; L. 1861, p. 58; original subject matter stricken and new subject substituted, L. 1966, ch. 10—Spec. Sess.; Nov. 8, 1966.*

*§ 5. Local public schools. Local public schools under the general supervision of the state board of education shall be maintained, **developed and operated by locally elected boards**. When authorized by law, such boards may make and carry out agreements for cooperative operation and administration of educational programs under the general supervision of the state board of education, but such agreements shall be subject to limitation, change or termination by the legislature. History: Adopted by convention, July 29, 1859; ratified by electors, Oct. 4, 1859; L. 1861, p. 59; original subject matter stricken and new subject substituted, L. 1966, ch. 10—Spec. Sess.; Nov. 8, 1966.*

§ 6. Finance. (a) The legislature may levy a permanent tax for the use and benefit of state institutions of higher education and apportion among and appropriate the same to the several institutions, which levy, apportionment and appropriation shall continue until changed by statute. Further appropriation and other provision for finance of institutions of higher education may be made by the legislature. (b) The legislature shall make suitable provision for finance of the educational interests of the State.

Dr. Cory L. Gibson

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No tuition shall be charged for attendance at any public school to pupils required by law to attend such school, except such fees or supplemental charges as may be authorized by law. The legislature may authorize the state board of regents to establish tuition, fees and charges at institutions under its supervision. (c) No religious sect or sects shall control any part of the public educational funds. History: Adopted by convention, July 29, 1859; ratified by electors, Oct. 4, 1859; L. 1861, p. 59; original subject matter stricken and new subject substituted, L. 1966, ch. 10—Spec. Sess.; Nov. 8, 1966.

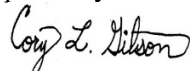
I do not oppose the right for families to choose a private school, parochial school, homeschool, or public school. I do oppose taxpayer funds being released for private use without the same level of accountability, transparency, state accreditation requirements, reporting requirements, and oversight by locally elected officials as public schools do as they serve **ALL** students, not just the ones who the school chooses to serve.

If this bill is approved by the committee, I believe it's critical that legislators honestly share with citizens that the funds will either be siphoned away from public schools and/or taxes will increase statewide to cover these additional costs. I believe the vast majority of Kansans would oppose this idea.

This bill appears to be a slippery slope and the undoing of our State's constitution and the democracy of our nation.

We appreciate your service to our great State and encourage you to keep our students in mind when making this vital decision.

Respectfully Submitted,



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