

House Taxation Committee
March 17, 2021
Opposition to HB 2421
Sister Therese Bangert
Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth

Chairman Smith and Committee,

Happy St. Patrick's Day and I begin with a Blessing

**May you have the hindsight to know where you've been
the foresight to know where you're going
and the insight to know when you're going too far.**

I was raised on a farm in Nebraska. I am always delighted when I can go home for the harvest and ride with my brothers and nephew in the combine, the semi trucks or the auger wagon tractor. Last year when I was there we were harvesting a corn patch close to a pretty remote road and the semi was parked along the road. When the auger wagon needed to be dumped, it was taken to the road. This meant the road was blocked for a few minutes. Well, a car came along – out of state license. As the woman waited impatiently she yelled, "You farmers think you own the roads."

My brother said he was startled. Most people in rural communities know that at harvest time you may get slowed down a bit by any vehicle pertaining to harvest. In retrospect he said, I wish I had shouted back, "If you would pay \$30,000 in land taxes then you could block the road for 5 minutes, too." (I would note that my brother is not a big landowner. He considers those taxes the price of doing business.)

I have advocated in the Legislative body since 1987. I have watched over and over the contentious issue that taxes become. It seems to me that it is easy to say we will cut taxes. "That's what constituents want", I have heard over and over. But when snow needs to be removed, a fire needs to be put out, an ambulance is needed or a family in poverty needs food and housing, people want these services. Some of you were here not so many years back when taxes were cut drastically. That meant the resources to meet Kansas governing obligations were cut drastically. Multiple policies were looked at to pump more resources into the budget for example, fees were raised and there was that \$400 million dollars borrowed with only interest paid for 10 years. Eventually some courageous legislators restored resources so that those of you here now can even vaguely consider a tax cut.

Our Sisters landed in Leavenworth in 1858. Our 2016 Mission Statement reads "**Mindful of the fragility of the earth and the suffering of God's people, especially the poor and marginalized, we commit ourselves to address these critical needs and their systemic causes.**" Throughout the decades we have done that many, many times in partnership with government resources. The struggle for basic family needs by parents is not unfamiliar to us. We believe in valuing them both and in valuing parents and families. The need for renewed infrastructure is not new to us. Our pioneer Sisters built hospitals. Our Sisters who minister with the homeless know the need for medical treatment and job training.

Just reading Monday morning's KC Star – the earthquakes in Wichita and the domestic violence statistic that according to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation an incident happens every 23 minutes in Kansas is a glimpse at needs in Kansas.

You who make policy for the people of Kansas, know these needs. I believe you know the need for policies that build-up the citizens of Kansas while making the tax system as fair as possible. HB 2421 does not do this and it is my understanding that at this point it does not have a fiscal note attached. I urge you not to give away the resources that will continue to give you choices for among others the school children and retirees of Kansas. Reject HB 2421.

On this St. Patrick's Day I leave you with my Gratitude for hearing me, my promise of continued prayers for the policy journey ahead and an Irish Blessing:

**May those who love you, love you.
And for those who don't love you
 May God turn their hearts
 and if they don't turn their hearts
 May they turn their ankles
 so that you will know them in their limping!**