

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB 2738.

I am a parent of three children and a former special education teacher. As someone who has first-hand experience working as a special education teacher, I implore you to reconsider this bill.

It is clear to me that you have not visited schools, talked to parents, or interacted with special educators, because if you had taken the time to do so, you would eagerly do whatever it takes to fully fund special education. Any public school would gladly open its doors to you to show you the immense passion and talent it takes to be a special education teacher.

Please go to a school. You'll see a special education teacher sitting with a child in their classroom, helping that child participate as fully as possible with their same-aged peers with the help of assistive technology. You'll see a para-professional helping a child enjoy recess with their peers, swinging on a wheelchair-friendly platform swing.

Maybe you'll even see a child, like my own nine year-old daughter who has an IEP for a speech disorder, give a speech in front of her class and subsequently get elected to student council.

The pride this gives me as a parent? Immeasurable. The knowledge that it wouldn't have been possible without the dedication of teachers? Undeniable. These successes aren't once-in-a-lifetime events; they're very real success stories that happen every day in schools across Kansas. Amazing things are happening in schools, regardless of your support. Imagine what could happen *with* adequate funding?

The look on a child's face when they can communicate a need with a picture. The smile on the face of the child swinging with peers. The feeling my daughter had when her friends could understand her words. All because of the dedication of teachers, who are simply asking for adequate funding to pay for the assistive technology, the adaptive playground equipment, and the instructional tools their students so desperately need.

These teachers and children need you. This is their time of need, the money is available, and the power is yours. Please do the right thing and talk to schools, talk to experts, and *listen* to them.

Teachers are heroes every day and their impact is incredible. Can you be a hero for them? We only have so many chances in our lives to do the right thing. What will your impact be?

Thank you,

Katie Roltgen
Olathe, KS