

March 6, 2024

Testimony to the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

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BILL NUMBER: SB 509, Education Opportunity Tax Credit

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

As a Kansas taxpayer and the parent of two recent graduates who attended Kansas public schools, I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB 509.

Kansans understand that our tax dollars are used to fund our excellent public school system that ensures Kansas kids receive a quality education that will serve them and their communities well. Public schools are a public good and our tax dollars are meant to fund public goods. Over 90% of Kansas kids attend public school.

My tax dollars should not be given to other Kansans via a tax credit to pay for their personal choice to send their children to a private school or to home school their children. This bill would provide a refundable tax credit of almost \$12,000 to a family with three children attending a private school.

It is inconceivable that Kansas taxpayers should foot the bill for someone's private education. We have excellent public schools and our tax dollars should be used to invest in our public schools, starting with fully funding special education. Statewide, districts are having to move \$173 million dollars from their general education funds to cover the shortfall in special education.

Quite simply, this bill is a school voucher in disguise. Kansans made it known last year when the legislature was trying to pass the Education Savings Account voucher programs that we do not want voucher programs in our state. Vouchers divert public tax dollars to private schools (and home schools) that lack accountability and are allowed to discriminate in admissions for any number of reasons.

It's time to stop the voucher train in Kansas and start fully funding our public schools by fully funding special education. Public tax dollars belong with our public schools that accept and educate all Kansas kids.

Please vote NO on bill SB 509.

Erin Woods
Leawood, KS