

SB 128 - Ad Astra Opportunity Tax Credit  
Proponent Written Testimony

February 6, 2023

To: John Gauntt, Committee Assistant  
cc: Senator Alicia Straub  
Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation  
Topeka, KS

Honorable Chairman Tyson, Vice-Chair Peck, Ranking Minority Holland, and  
Committee Members:

I'm writing in support of SB 128 Ad Astra Opportunity Tax Credit. I agree with the proposed bill as written and I would like to see it move forward without changes.

My family has been homeschooling for three years. I have two boys who are THRIVING by learning with community one day and at home the rest of the week. Our choice to do school in this way allows us freedom to pursue interests specific to each child, learn alongside my husband as he grows his new business, and build time into our weekday schedule to serve others in meaningful ways. These pursuits and the routine of learning traditional school subjects are worthy of our time and resources, but the financial sacrifices are many.

The proposed Ad Astra Opportunity Tax Credit would allow me to better educate my kids by offsetting many costs! Our traditional subjects are learned through books, books, books. We utilize the public library as much as possible but there are many books we need for long periods of time that can't be loaned. Building up our own home library of resources is important. I also utilize math curriculum that must be purchased annually as my kids advance. Along with books, there are some basic supplies that are a necessity. I have tried to minimize supply purchases this year to save money. It would be helpful to have more money in our budget for these important learning tools.

Since I don't have the support system of multiple teachers in a school setting, sometimes my best choice is to outsource certain subjects. For example, my boys both just started to learn Mandarin Chinese. There is no way I could teach that effectively! The cost of lessons/tutoring would be eased by this credit.

Other extracurricular pursuits, whether sports or fine arts are also out of pocket and should be considered part of the cost of educating a child. Another financial consideration is field trips and travel for all educational activities.

Once a week, we do school together with many other families using a structured Classical education model. On our community day, I tutor a class of seven students learning Geography, Math, Latin, Science, English, History, and Fine Arts. I am paid as an independent contractor for my work as a tutor, but in reality that income is just offsetting the cost of enrollment for my kids. The costs to for this program have been worth it for the time with community and the rigorous education which has challenged and delighted my boys. Even so, it's on my list of school expenses that add up quickly. With over 50 students enrolled, the number of families in this program that would be helped by this tax credit is significant.

If taxes are allocated to help students, those taxes should help ALL students. I appreciate that this proposed credit is attempting a fair approach to giving all students the same benefits in their education. My tax dollars help other kids in public schools, yet my kids aren't currently given the same allowance. My husband and I are striving to raise men of character that will contribute to society. The Ad Astra Opportunity Tax Credit would certainly be a help in furthering that noble pursuit.

I kindly ask for your support of SB 128 for these reasons.

Thank you,

Briana Vilayoune  
Parent, Homeschool Educator, Tutor

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