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Oral Testimony – Opponent  
Senate Committee on Education  
Senate Bill 437  
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Chairwoman Baumgardner, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 437

Although the title of this bill makes it sound like a great opportunity for Kansas students, the reality is this is \$100 million of public tax dollars to subsidize unaccountable, private schools. This is the very definition of a voucher program.

While the resolution language at the beginning of this bill makes it seem like it would just be for public school students, the definition of “qualified student” is written broadly enough to include any student in the state of Kansas in grades K-12, regardless of what school they’re attending. There is no requirement that the student receiving the funds be enrolled in public schools. Additionally, “qualifying expenses” is defined broadly enough to allow the funds allocated for this program to be used for anything authorized by the state treasurer.

Furthermore, there is no accountability affiliated with the use of these funds. As legislators you often ask about the return on investment related to programs. You question whether our public schools are producing results worthy of your investment. You ask what the relationship is between spending and learning outcomes. Yet, in this bill, you are willing to expand a program and give away millions more in taxpayer money to schools that will never report results to you.

We urge you to reject Senate Bill 437, and instead invest the \$100 million from the state general fund for the purpose of truly serving all Kansas families.