

February 5, 2023

Testimony to the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

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BILL NUMBER: SB128

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: written only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill SB128.

I oppose bill SB83 and voucher programs in general.

- Public tax dollars should remain with our public schools that accept and educate all children.
- Instead of funding private schools, the legislature should focus on fully funding special education, which currently has a shortfall of \$160 million.
- Private schools that can pick and choose which children they want to serve should NOT receive our public dollars.
- Rural students (and communities) are harmed as public-school resources are drained and students lack little to no private options. Rural communities will end up subsidizing private school tuition for families in metro areas.

My husband and I decided to move from MO to KS specifically for the amazing public education system- arguably one of the best in the country. I was born and raised in Johnson County and wanted our children to experience the same wonderful educational experience I did. We should be proud of that and continue to enhance it by FULLY FUNDING SPECIAL EDUCATION, not diverting money to private schools that would never accept one of my children.

As a parent of a child with an IEP and in the SPED program at SMSD, I am appalled that this bill being put forth exists. The SPED program is crucial to children like my son. He receives services (OT/Speech) within SMSD that he would never receive at a private school. We need to uplift, respect, and educate ALL children regardless of ability.

This is not a "school choice" bill. This is a "shift the cost of someone's choice to send their kids to private schools onto everyone else" bill. We all pay for public schools- people without kids and people with kids that aren't school age- because they keep our neighborhoods strong, and they bolster our property values.

Do the right thing and vote NO on bill SB128!

Thank you for your consideration,

Deana Curtin
SMSD Parent
Prairie Village, KS