

Barbara Casey, Teacher testimony
U.S.D. 512 Shawnee Mission
House Standing Committee on Education
February 11, 2013
House Bill 2221

My name is Barbara Casey and I'm a 5th grade teacher at Oak Park – Carpenter Elementary School in the Shawnee Mission School District, and a proud member of NEA-Shawnee Mission. I've had the pleasure of working with my professional association in a number of different roles. One of those roles has been as a member of the bargaining team.

NEA-Shawnee Mission is the representative for SMSD's professional employees for the purpose of bargaining. As such, our organization enjoys certain rights of access to the professional employees in the school district. Judging from previous legislation that has been introduced and the testimony associated with that legislation, it appears to be some people's opinions that the association uses those rights to bully or intimidate educators.

I can assure you that is not the reality. NEA-SM uses its rights to encourage growth in the District's teachers. Our organization offers professional development classes to help new teachers prepare for their first parent-teacher conferences, to provide helpful classroom management skills to teachers, and to help educators become more comfortable using classroom technology.

NEA-SM uses its rights to help facilitate effective communication between principals and educators. The building representatives in each building serve as a conduit, taking concerns to the principal and working to reach solutions that are good for everyone in the school.

NEA-SM uses its rights to help the community. This year NEA-SM has sponsored a shoe drive and clothing drive to help needy students in SMSD.

We are able to do these things because we have access to the school's buildings. If **House Bill 2221** were to become law, it would force the district to either allow any group that wanted access to the buildings in, or force them to exclude everyone. It's likely that SMSD would choose to exclude all groups, including ours. If that were to happen we would no longer be able to help SMSD's educators strengthen their skills, help the community, or help problem-solve within buildings.

I urge you to consider the cost to the educational program that this bill would cause. This would weaken the education system in Kansas, and hurt our students. I hope you will oppose this bill.