



DOUGLAS COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

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Helen Schnoes
Food Systems Coordinator

HB2143 - Testimony For K-12 Budget Committee
To the House K-12 Budget Committee
Provided by Helen Schnoes, Douglas County, Kansas
January 31, 2017

Dear Representative Campbell and Members of the K-12 Budget Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns about the local school district procurement powers proposed in HB2143—Requiring school districts to procure specific spend categories through the department of education.

As a partner to our county's school districts' food service departments, I oppose this bill.

The lack of clarity and seeming limitations this proposed legislation places on local School Board budgetary decisions threatens burgeoning efforts to connect Kansas agricultural producers with area school food service departments. I encourage you to clearly maintain the authority of individual school boards to oversee their food service budgets. Your decision to vote against this bill as currently written is essential to protecting our local agricultural assets, which are the foundation to our Kansas economy. Through our efforts to link Douglas County school districts with area farmers, we have seen the excitement that students take to learning more about Kansas agriculture. Nutritional benefits build upon these agricultural connections.

The Kansas Legislature should not prevent locally-elected decision makers from determining how to best support farmers in their community and ensure the health of their students. The intention of Topeka bureaucrats to mandate lowest-priced bids on food, including essential nutrition programs, to save a few pennies strikes against our farmers in favor of foods shipped across the country. In Douglas County, we trust our School Boards to make decisions that meet the needs of their students and our community.

For these reasons, I strongly encourage you to vote against HB2143.

If you have any further questions about the benefits area farmers receive when selling to local school districts, I would be happy to speak further. You may contact me at the number and email listed above.

Helen Schnoes
Douglas County Food Systems Coordinator