



**AMERICANS FOR
PROSPERITY.**

February 11, 2022

Chairman and Members of Committee, thank you for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

My name is Elizabeth Patton and I am the state director of Americans for Prosperity—Kansas. On behalf of the thousands activists across our state, we urge you to support House Bill 2615, which would expand educational opportunities for thousands of students in our state.

Under the provisions of this bill, students would be able to receive credit for learning that takes place outside of the classroom. 21st-century learning can no longer be a one-way lecture from a teacher to a student. Nor should it be a rigid trajectory designed to steer students from elementary school to college to work. The recent pandemic has highlighted the limitations of this approach and today more than ever parents are demanding more individualized solutions that put students, not systems, at the center. Families and their children deserve a more individualized, flexible approach to learning, one that exposes students to a wide variety of educational opportunities. This is because each child is different, and all children deserve a menu of options—programs, services, courses, and schools that are designed to address their unique interests and aptitudes.

The goal of our education system should not be that of standardizing children. It should be to allow every student to discover, develop, and apply their talents to realize their full potential and maximize their capacity to contribute to society. One way of reaching this goal is to ensure we recognize learning wherever it occurs. House Bill 2615 helps us do just that. This bill creates a path for students to earn course credits for out-of-classroom learning opportunities. Through partnerships with nonprofits, businesses, trade associations, educators, and other community organizations, students are able to receive district-recognized credit for approved programs at participating providers. For instance, students could receive credit for performing in a play at a local playhouse, participating in a robotics club, completing one of the many programs offered through a Boys & Girls Club, and many other educational opportunities provided in the community. In a way, this bill helps us recognize what every parent already knows: children learn through a diversity of approaches and from a variety of experiences; this can include learning in a traditional classroom, but also experiences far beyond the walls of a traditional school.

Every child in Kansas should have access to a quality education allowing them to discover, develop, and apply their unique talents to find lifelong fulfillment and contribute to their community. This bill is a step in the right direction towards achieving this goal.

It is for these reasons that we respectfully ask for your favorable support of H.B. 2615.

Elizabeth Patton

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Americans for Prosperity—Kansas