

Testimony before the
House Committee on Education

on
Testimony on HB 2885

by

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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on **HB 2885**. As we understand the bill, it would increase the amount of revenue a school district can raise using the cost of living weighting.

KASB appears today as an opponent of this measure because this weighting is financed by an unequalized local mill levy. Our policy positions include the following points.

First, the responsibility for providing funding for a suitable education for every child rests with the state of Kansas, not the taxpayers or voters of individual school districts. (This is not only KASB's position but the ruling of the Kansas Supreme Court.) The primary way this responsibility should be met is through the base budget per pupil. Unfortunately, the base budget is currently far below the actual costs of providing a suitable education. (***This*** is not only KASB's position but the findings of legislative cost studies.)

Second, KASB supports the use of weighting factors to make adjustments based on differences in costs among school districts. The cost of living weighting is apparently based on the idea that districts with high housing costs need additional funding to provide a suitable education to the students in those districts. If that is true, then such funding should be provided by the state, not as a local mill levy.

Third, because the state does not provide funding for the cost of living weighting, this feature is in reality not a weighting but another way to allow optional local enhancements “on top of” the local option budget. KASB supports the ability of districts to enhance their budgets by local action, but only if there is state assistance provided so every district can use this authority with a similar tax effort. The current cost of living weighting has no state aid component, and **HB 2885** does not provide such a component.

As a result, **HB 2885** would make a disequalizing feature of the school finance formula even more disequalizing. We therefore must oppose this bill. Thank you for your consideration.