

# State of Kansas

## Senate Chamber



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## TY MASTERSON STATE SENATE DISTRICT 16

Chairman Baumgardner and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **SB 424**, a measure that would create the position of Education Inspector General.

The core of what we do here in Topeka is pass laws, most particularly an annual budget which allocates billions of taxpayer dollars to various programs. Over half of our budget goes to one thing – K-12 education.

If we are to have any credibility in anything we do here, the citizens of Kansas simply must have confidence that we are allocating their dollars according to the laws their representatives enact. These allocations simply cannot be subject to the individual whims of bureaucrats or individual legislators based on conversations they may or may not have had. They must be made according to law.

This is particularly important regarding education. The school finance formula is notoriously complicated, so complicated that many believe only one man knows the fine details or even precisely how each part works.

This complexity and the importance of school finance calls for an extra layer of accountability, a position solely dedicated to ensuring education tax dollars are lawfully spent. In this era of calls for increased transparency, *now is the time* to take decisive action.

This is the essence behind the Education Inspector General we are proposing in this legislation.

By being appointed by the State Treasurer and not the Governor or the Legislature, it ensures there is a separation that will keep the position from being politicized and instead focus it on the singular, yet critical task of ensuring accountability over these critical expenditures.

In closing, when we campaign before the voters, we often talk about finding solutions to problems. If we are ever going to turn that rhetoric into reality, then we need to pass legislation like this. It's a narrowly crafted solution to a clearly identified problem regarding over half the state budget.

Doing nothing and pretending like it didn't happen should not be options. This legislation addresses the matter in a common-sense, practical way that will help restore confidence in this critical area of government.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I urge you to support of this bill.