



**Success for
Kansas Students**

Legislative Testimony IN SUPPORT OF EXPANDING THE TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Select Committee on Education Finance,
May 19, 2017

My name is Bishop Wade Moore, Jr. I am the Senior Pastor of Christian Faith Centre in Wichita, Kansas. I have also served as President of the Greater Wichita Ministerial League for the past two years. The League consists of the pastors and ministers of predominantly African-American churches representing thousands of members in the Greater Wichita community. I am also the founder of the Urban Preparatory Academy in the city of Wichita. Additionally, I am the president of Success for Kansas Students, an organization committed to closing achievement gaps in Kansas and providing more educational opportunities for Kansas children. I apologize for not being able to deliver this testimony in person.

I have also been a part of the school choice rallies held here at the capital. There are many reasons why I believe we must expand tax credit scholarship laws and school choice in the state of Kansas. Efforts made in SB 251 to limit the program go in the wrong direction. Kansas kids need more choice, not less.

First, we have a moral responsibility to do what is right for each Kansas child. We can see by the National Test Scores that our children are victims of an educational system that cannot move them forward. When we look at the results of low income students in reading and math it is frightening! Some of the data has determined the amount of years it will take for children to catch up with their peers and this is unjust! Their lives do count! Some of the more fortunate ones receive a high school diploma they probably earned and the less fortunate drop out of school or they receive a high school diploma that was “given” to them as they were pushed through a system that left them unprepared for college, trade school or employment. They have no chance at life!

My school participates in the Tax Credit Scholarship Program for Low Income Children. Our school population is 39 students at this present time. We began the school last school year with 13 students. We were able to triple the enrollment because of the TCSP. This program and the expansion of it will allow more Kansas students to move ahead like the rest of the nation in education reform. We are seeing our children catch up and excel in reading and math because of the TCSP.

I believe that we need this program as means of allowing businesses and INDIVIDUALS who really want to help our children get turned around for the good. Allow them to do what they feel in their heart is the right thing to do. When I speak to people in the community about this, they always wonder why these laws have never been passed to help our children. Well, the time is right now for laws to be expanded and passed so that good citizens with good hearts are able to use their personal finances to benefit children and receive a full tax credit for their goodwill. Many of them understand that the playing field is not level.

When will it be our Kansas children's opportunity to get the same or comparable opportunities that so many other states have given their children? I have witnessed thousands of our children become statistics and used for the benefit of others to prosper. These bills make it possible for our children to prosper and maybe some of them will grow up to become great! Some may even sit where you are sitting today!

Most of the children I know and deal with on a weekly and daily basis are seriously injured for the rest of their lives. Some of them are "dead" and it is over for them. They will never recover to become productive citizens or enjoy the American dream! Thousands of them are so shaken and disoriented because of the "education" they have received that when they attempt anything positive in life, the effects of not having a great education causes them to fall further and further behind in life!

We have a 911 situation in education and we need your help right away! You are the ones that have been voted in and appointed to do something about this and we need your help!

Our students at Urban Prep Academy receive a great education and get tested through a public school district in our area. This year our students will participate in the State Assessments! So, we are not hiding in a corner conducting only internal testing. We also use STAR testing to make sure our kids are improving and see where we need to work harder. I want to prove that different schools really work and can have a better impact on children than traditional public schools. I want to prove that we can operate on a high level of excellence even in urban communities! We must be successful in getting our elected and appointed officials to stand and do what is right for the children.

There is a lot discussion about accreditation. Urban Prep is not accredited but it is something we're exploring. We are a brand new school and building the school as we work to educate kids right now. We

are actively looking at non-state accreditation and are open to a discussion about alternative accreditation as part of this program. Do not limit the curriculum we use, the tests we give, or the types of accreditation we're looking at. Let the teachers in our school, who have worked in Kansas public schools, find the right options for our kids and our school. Mandating a specific type of accreditation makes it harder for us to reach the kids in the neighborhood who need the most help.

The expansion of laws will help make sure that at least some children that would not otherwise have an opportunity have that opportunity for the education that meets their need! I have made great personal financial sacrifices to continue the dream of a successful school in Wichita, Kansas.

One piece of data I would like to provide you with is the lives I encounter daily of low income and poverty stricken children who seem to have no hope. I am presenting them hope with the Urban Preparatory Academy! I am allowing students to attend a school that has a rigorous course of study where they are held to a higher achievement standard and excellence is demanded. I have witnessed this with my own eyes in other cities and neighboring states that different schools work! We urge you to pass/approve/expand the TCS law as soon as possible. Children are sitting waiting for this to happen.

Sincerely,

Wade Moore, Jr.
Senior Pastor: Christian Faith Centre
Founder: Urban Preparatory Academy
President: Success for Kansas Students