



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

|  |             |  |                      |
|--|-------------|--|----------------------|
| BILL NUMBER:<br><b>HB 541</b>  |             | DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021</b>                 |                      |
| COMMITTEE:<br><b>Elementary and Secondary Education</b>  |             |  |                      |
| <b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES |             |  |                      |
| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |             |  |                      |
| <b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>  |             |  |                      |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>ERIC SCROGGINS</b>   |             | PHONE NUMBER:<br><b>314-356-4784</b>     |                      |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:<br><b>THE OPPORTUNITY TRUST</b>  |             | TITLE:<br><b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER</b> |                      |
| ADDRESS:<br><b>4220 DUNCAN AVENUE, SUITE 201</b>   |             |  |                      |
| CITY:<br><b>ST. LOUIS</b>  |             | STATE:<br><b>MO</b>                      | ZIP:<br><b>63110</b> |
| EMAIL:   | ATTENDANCE: | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021 12:00 AM</b> |                      |
| <b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>  |             |  |                      |



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| <b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES |                               |   |
| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |                               |   |
| <b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>  |                               |   |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>ALLEN MOSS</b>   |                               | PHONE NUMBER:<br><b>417-967-3024</b>    |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:<br><b>HOUSTON R-1 SCHOOL DISTRICT</b>  |                               | TITLE:<br><b>SUPERINTENDENT</b>         |
| ADDRESS:<br><b>423 W. PINE STREET</b>  |                               |   |
| CITY:<br><b>HOUSTON</b>  |                               | STATE:<br><b>MO</b>                     |
|  |                               | ZIP:<br><b>65483</b>                    |
| EMAIL:<br><b>amos@houston.k12.mo.us</b>  | ATTENDANCE:<br><b>Written</b> | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021 8:40 AM</b> |

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HB541 appears to be a bill designed to profit no one except perhaps the group that submitted the bill. Communities such as Houston are not of sufficient size to support two different schools and be successful. We would like to see some evidence that supports charters are performing better than rural K-12 schools with the same criteria. Currently my school(Houston) is on the list due to a subgroup of IEP scores that ranked us along with the bottom 5%. This data is based on scores from 2017. This neither reflects where we are as a school or where our students are in relation to the rest of the state. Now, while that only puts us in a targeted placement versus comprehensive, it truly shows this bill will do no good. We have spent the last 3-4 years focused on our special education department including going through a DESE on-site review to improve our services provided by our special education staff. Measures include monitoring numbers of IEP students to promote more regular class time, MAP-A testing, etc. We are a fiscal agent for a 10 school special education coop and provide superior services to many schools around us. Further, can we get into a semblance of normal, before you start adding more requirements. Can we get a couple of years of normal testing data before you start issuing these types of accountability measures.



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| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |                               |  |
| <b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>   |                               |  |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>ARNIE C. AC "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVO</b>   |                               | PHONE NUMBER:                            |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:  |                               | TITLE:                                   |
| ADDRESS:   |                               |  |
| CITY:  |                               | STATE:                  ZIP:             |
| EMAIL:<br><b>arniedienoff@yahoo.com</b>  | ATTENDANCE:<br><b>Written</b> | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/1/2021 11:18 PM</b> |
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**I am Opposed to this Bill. To many loop-holes and questions. It will Close Neighborhood Schools and destroy Communities.**



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| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |                               |   |
| <b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>  |                               |   |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>BETTY VASSMER</b>  |                               | PHONE NUMBER:<br><b>660-255-4415</b>    |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:<br><b>COWGILL R-VI</b>   |                               | TITLE:<br><b>SUPERINTENDENT</b>         |
| ADDRESS:<br><b>341 EAST 6TH STREET</b>   |                               |   |
| CITY:<br><b>COWGILL</b>  | STATE:<br><b>MO</b>           | ZIP:<br><b>64637</b>                    |
| EMAIL:<br><b>bvassmer@cowgillr6.org</b>  | ATTENDANCE:<br><b>Written</b> | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/1/2021 3:15 PM</b> |

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

I am the superintendent of Cowgill R-VI School District, a small rural school district located in northwest Missouri. I want to speak out against HB 541. The federal ESSA Act would lead you to believe that our students are failing. I'm here to say that they are no failing. Our school prides itself in providing many individualized instructional opportunities to our students based on our student populations. In 2018 we were tagged as failing due to the results of a once-a-year assessment and a formula that is unfair to small school districts. During the 2018-19 school district, we showed growth based on our state assessment; however, in the 2019-20 school year, we were not allowed to administer the state testing, and for the current school year, we will be taking the state assessment, but it will not account for our success. So, you are telling me that the only way a school district can show that it is not a failing district is solely based upon a once-a-year test? If so, this is a flawed identification system. I fall into the loophole of not having another opportunity to show my students' success here at Cowgill. The federal government's only accountability measure is to depend on just one test. To show student growth, you must take multiple snapshots of that students. That is what we are doing here in our District through quarterly local assessments, and we are showing tremendous growth among our students. Teachers can desegregate their student's data and offer meaningful intervention and enrichments based on teaching students individual needs. Students and parents can see a visible picture of their needs and growth. The federal government should consider a culmination of end-of-year growth data to determine if districts are failing or succeeding. It shows a more accurate picture, and districts can produce accountability plans that determine whether or not that student meets their state's standard. This bill pushes charter schools, but look how many charter schools are on the list! There is no proof that charter schools do a better job of educating challenging students. Charter school boards are not elected by the public and are often run by private companies. That means that your community members will have less influence over the quality of their schools. Thank you for your time, and I hope you will vote no on HB 541 as it does not ensure all Missouri students' success.



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| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>   |                               |   |                      |
| <b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>   |                               |   |                      |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>BRIAN HENRY</b>   |                               | PHONE NUMBER:<br><b>573-842-2097</b>    |                      |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:<br><b>WAYNESVILLE R-VI SCHOOL DISTRICT</b>  |                               | TITLE:<br><b>SUPERINTENDENT</b>         |                      |
| ADDRESS:<br><b>200 FLEETWOOD DR</b>   |                               |   |                      |
| CITY:<br><b>WAYNESVILLE</b>   |                               | STATE:<br><b>MO</b>                     | ZIP:<br><b>65583</b> |
| EMAIL:<br><b>bhenry@waynesville.k12.mo.us</b>   | ATTENDANCE:<br><b>Written</b> | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/1/2021 4:22 PM</b> |                      |

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

Dear Education Committees, I am writing this testimony as a response regarding House Bill 541 and Senate Bill 133, which seeks to further punish public school districts through the accreditation process who have a school or schools on the comprehensive improvement list for a period of time, which is a school or schools performing in the bottom 5% of schools in the State of Missouri. While the timing of such legislation given the enormous responsibilities placed on teachers and school districts throughout the state during the COVID-19 Pandemic is preposterous, there are numerous reasons these bills should not move forward. Please consider the following: • While the Waynesville R-VI School District does not have a school in the comprehensive category, most large school districts will suffer from a designation given the language of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA utilizes an enrollment of 30 students to qualify as a subgroup, or groups created by demographic characteristics of the students (i.e. Special Education Students). This disproportionately impacts larger districts, because many smaller districts do not have 30 students in a subgroup per building such as Special Education. ESSA then requires school districts to compare the subgroup performance with that of all other subgroups. For example, Special Education Students are being compared to Overall Students, who typically have higher performance than subgroups such as Special Education. In addition, ESSA and this legislation targets schools for the performance of a small percentage of their overall population, thereby labeling an entire school or schools ineffective when improvements may only need to be made in a much more focused area. • ESSA already requires school districts to submit a plan of action to remediate schools on the targeted list for performance, and further supports are already provided to schools who fall into the comprehensive category. Why are additional sanctions necessary? • If a school district needs support, what research suggests an external provider or charter school would correct the inadequacy of a particular subgroup or subgroups? There are numerous charter schools on the current list of targeted and comprehensive schools and little evidence to suggest charters are a better option overall. While there are high performing charter schools, these schools are not in the majority. • Missouri Public School Districts are subject to numerous regulatory controls, including the governance of an elected school board. Each year further regulations are passed by the legislature creating additional responsibilities for public schools, which further diminish instructional time and can be costly. Charter schools are not subject to all of these regulations and can be run by a private company instead of a locally elected school board, which reduces local involvement in the education of their children. Thank you for taking the time to review a small number of the many concerns. As Superintendent of the Waynesville R-VI School District, I can attest that we have worked diligently to address the needs of all our learners, regardless of demographic characteristics and provided a fully seated environment throughout the Pandemic. The majority of our teachers and public school districts should be commended for their

passion and diligence in the education of our students. Seeking to pass legislation that will further undermine sentiment for public education and provide an inaccurate message on the effectiveness of schools will not improve the education of our students. Sincerely, Brian L. Henry, Ed. D. Superintendent, Waynesville R-VI School District



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| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>   |                               |   |                      |
| <b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>   |                               |   |                      |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>CHRIS M BERGER</b>  |                               | PHONE NUMBER:<br><b>636-745-7200</b>    |                      |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:<br><b>WRIGHT CITY R-II</b>  |                               | TITLE:<br><b>SUPERINTENDENT</b>         |                      |
| ADDRESS:<br><b>900 BELL RD</b>  |                               |   |                      |
| CITY:<br><b>WRIGHT CITY</b>   |                               | STATE:<br><b>MO</b>                     | ZIP:<br><b>63390</b> |
| EMAIL:<br><b>christopher.berger@wrightcity.k12.mo.us</b>  | ATTENDANCE:<br><b>Written</b> | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021 7:41 AM</b> |                      |

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

I am providing this written testimony in response to House Bill 541 and Senate Bill 133. Both bills are obvious attempts to redirect public dollars to private entities by eroding public trust and unwarranted punishing Missouri's school districts. Students in the Wright City School District are learning at high levels, are graduating college and career ready students, and are being taught by a dynamic and hard-working staff. That three of our buildings have been labeled "Targeted" does not tell the entire story. We have three students currently employed as Registered Youth Apprentices in area businesses and through the Missouri Department of Labor, and we have two more who are soon to be when all requisite paperwork in completed. We have over 20 high school students who are currently dual enrolled at both Wright City High School and either Missouri Southern State University or St. Charles Community College, and in May, we will have students graduate simultaneously from WCHS with a high school diploma and SCCC with an associate's degree. Internal data from our elementary and middle school buildings indicates high levels of student growth from the 2019 school, even though the pandemic has interrupted learning and caused a shutdown of buildings. Amazingly, we have students farther ahead in many areas in February of 2021 than the grade-level groups were in 2019, which speaks volumes to the work of our terrific educators. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires a plan of action to remedy schools on the targeted list for performance. Our students are improving, learning and succeeding, and the accountability measures in place help direct us toward that improvement. Both bills are further flawed in how to improve schools who are in need of support. I am not familiar of any research that indicates an external partner, which would predictably suggest a charter school, leads to improvement overall or in subgroups. I am familiar with failing charter schools, despite the fact they are not held to the same standard as public schools. Thank you for allowing testimony. I am confident in the direction the Wright City R-II schools are taking as submitted in our improvement plan. Dr. Chris BergerSuperintendentWright City R-II



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| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |                               |   |
| <b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>   |                               |   |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>DELLA BELL-FREEMAN</b>   |                               | PHONE NUMBER:                           |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:  |                               | TITLE:                                  |
| ADDRESS:   |                               |   |
| CITY:  |                               | STATE:      ZIP:                        |
| EMAIL:<br><b>dellbell1970@gmail.com</b>  | ATTENDANCE:<br><b>Written</b> | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/1/2021 8:11 PM</b> |
| <b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>  |                               |   |

I am writing in opposition to HB 541. This bill labels our students and our schools as failing. Our students and schools are not failing! Our students are in the middle of a pandemic, and this legislation puts students and teachers under additional stress. Our doors have been open during summer school and this school year with many new protocols, and we have worked our tails off to make seated instruction happen for our students despite all the odds against us. That is not failing; that is embracing change and succeeding! During the first months of school, 85 districts in Southwest Missouri tracked data on the number of students and staff in quarantine. The number surpassed 19,000 which resulted in an estimated 193,000 school days missed. To make accountability decisions based on testing of any type during the pandemic and in the years directly following the pandemic when we are working to compensate for the closure last spring and periodic wellness breaks at the building level and individual quarantines is simply wrong. There is no logic in that. Missouri labeled schools as targeted and comprehensive two years ago, and the schools have been working hard to make improvements ever since that time. In my own district, our elementary school has been labeled as targeted due to performance issues with our special needs students. Our professional development since being labeled has focused on differentiation of instruction, involvement with the District Continuous Improvement program, effectively using local data to monitor the effectiveness of instruction, alignment of curriculum, and the adoption of new guided reading materials. Even during the midst of the pandemic, we have focused and worked to ensure all children are moving forward with appropriate instructional supports. The very thought of adding to the stress of our students and educators during a time when mental health is a priority is again wrong! This bill pushes the expansion of charter schools, however, there is no evidence that charters are more effective than local public schools. I would encourage you to look at the list of targeted and comprehensive schools and examine how many charter schools are included. There is no proof that charter schools do a better job of educating challenging students. If you look closely at the data on charters and MOCAP providers, you'll find dismal results. Does it make sense to invest tax payer money in programs that don't get optimal results? Charter school boards are not elected by the public and are often run by private companies; they have no vested interest in the community or its students. Their interest is monetary. The expansion of charters means that your community members will have less influence over the quality of their schools. Again, I must ask is this best? Is this best for our students and Missouri's future? I believe the answer to that question is a resounding no! In conclusion, our local schools are identified prior to COVID as having performance issues are working hard to make sure all students are learning, and to impose additional sanctions through legislation based on data collected now and in the very near future is simply wrong! Additionally, to exclude charters funded by public tax dollars from the regulations and assessments public schools are judged by is a double standard and one

**furthered by campaign donations rather than a concern for the wellbeing of Missouri's children.**



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| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |                               |   |                      |
| <b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>  |                               |   |                      |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>DESI KIRCHHOFFER</b>   |                               | PHONE NUMBER:<br><b>314-910-1087</b>    |                      |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:<br><b>NORTHWEST SCHOOL DISTRICT</b>  |                               | TITLE:<br><b>SUPERINTENDENT</b>         |                      |
| ADDRESS:<br><b>4290 GRAVOIS ROAD</b>   |                               |   |                      |
| CITY:<br><b>HOUSE SPRINGS</b>  |                               | STATE:<br><b>MO</b>                     | ZIP:<br><b>63049</b> |
| EMAIL:<br><b>dkirchhofer@northwestschools.net</b>  | ATTENDANCE:<br><b>Written</b> | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/1/2021 3:04 PM</b> |                      |

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

I am writing to you about two pieces of legislation currently in the Missouri House of Representatives and Senate. HB541 and its state senate equivalent, SB133, are very concerning and extremely misguided when it comes to identifying a “failing” school. HB541 and SB133 “Requires DESE to annually publish on their website a list of schools performing in the bottom 5% of schools for more than three years.” It is similar to grading on a curve. Let’s say, for example, you have a classroom full of students who are all performing very well, yet you have to create an arbitrary cut off and identify the lowest 5% of students as “failing.” A student may be labeled “failing” even though they may be achieving at a high level. Just as every student in a classroom can be successful, so can every school in the State of Missouri. While I can’t speak for every school that may be on the list, I can speak about three schools on the DESE “targeted list” in the Northwest R-I School District. All three schools are beloved and the pride of the community. Are there items related to serving every student that need and will continue to improve? Yes, and that should always be the goal - continuous improvement. These schools are the backbone of the community and serve students and families in so many ways beyond traditional academics. Of the Northwest R-I Schools on a “targeted list,” all three participate in the Franklin Covey Foundation Leader in Me work. One of the schools recently received the distinguished honor of being named a “Lighthouse School.” All of the schools pride themselves on balancing the importance of academics and character. Not only do the schools teach to the Missouri learning standards, they also emphasize leadership and service to others. All of the schools place students in leadership roles, and all of the schools participate in community service projects. In addition to being the pride of the community, Northwest High School culminated with a graduation rate over 90% and dozens of yearly Bright Flight scholarships. Last year alone, Northwest graduating seniors were offered over \$10,000,000 in scholarships. Those numbers are hardly failing, but are indicative of the success of the Northwest School District. These schools are successfully and unequivocally serving the students of our community. In addition to the great success our schools are having, the bottom 5% would be identified by using an unreliable and inconsistent assessment system. Using a baseline percentage to categorize schools as “failing” is an extremely dangerous and slippery slope. Closing schools because of misleading and careless metrics could close a community by forcing economic hardship and blight. Neither HB 541 or SB 133 make any sense when it comes to creating and supporting quality schools in the State of Missouri. Passing these bills would result in a never ending cycle of yearly closings in the Missouri public school system. Each year, “failing” schools would be forced to close and a new set of “failing” schools would be identified. Passage of these bills would end up destroying the State’s economy. I urge you to consider the big picture and devastating effects these bills could have on one of the greatest cornerstones of local control and democracy - public schools.



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| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |                               |   |
| <b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>   |                               |   |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>JANE RAIMONDO</b>  |                               | PHONE NUMBER:                           |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:  |                               | TITLE:                                  |
| ADDRESS:   |                               |   |
| CITY:  |                               | STATE:      ZIP:                        |
| EMAIL:<br><b>mdlashgrl@netscape.net</b>  | ATTENDANCE:<br><b>Written</b> | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021 8:26 AM</b> |
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**Our students are not failing! My family has taught, administered and attended Webster Groves Schools for a total of over 60 years and none of the schools, including Hixson, are anywhere near failing. Those who advocate garbage legislation like this are failing. Similar legislation caused the previous fiascos in the Riverview and Normandy school districts and cost those districts money to subsidize wealthier districts where the children were sent. Finally, that whole project blew up and was dropped. So here we go again. The charter schools backing this legislation have nothing new to offer, their schools do no better if not worse than the public schools, yet they are not covered by the legislation. Please stop wasting your time on this. No one believes it is anything but a self serving exercise to push your anti government anti public school agenda.**



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| <b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>   |                               |   |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>JOHN RAIMONDO</b>  |                               | PHONE NUMBER:                           |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:  |                               | TITLE:                                  |
| ADDRESS:   |                               |   |
| CITY:  |                               | STATE:      ZIP:                        |
| EMAIL:<br><b>raimondoljohn50@gmail.com</b>   | ATTENDANCE:<br><b>Written</b> | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021 8:40 AM</b> |
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I strongly oppose this bill HB 541. It is based on only one measure of performance and can negatively impact children in an otherwise well performing school. One of the solutions proposed, turning it in to a charter school. makes no sense. Charter schools have no community oversight. This will impact not only the students but the community, as well. Please vote against this bill.



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| <b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES |                               |  |
| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |                               |  |
| <b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>   |                               |  |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>MADLINE RAIMONDO</b>   |                               | PHONE NUMBER:                            |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:  |                               | TITLE:                                   |
| ADDRESS:   |                               |  |
| CITY:  |                               | STATE:      ZIP:                         |
| EMAIL:<br><b>maddy_raimondo@yahoo.com</b>  | ATTENDANCE:<br><b>Written</b> | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021 10:59 AM</b> |
| <b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>  |                               |  |

I worked with the Opportunity Trust who tried to convince me that I should abandon the programs I worked on within the public schools and leave to start a charter. Why would they discourage a public school employee to abandon their work within a public school that was working? They are actively trying to destroy our public schools. Please do not vote for this bill.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

|  |                               |   |
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| BILL NUMBER:<br><b>HB 541</b>  |                               | DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021</b>                |
| COMMITTEE:<br><b>Elementary and Secondary Education</b>  |                               |   |
| <b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES |                               |   |
| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |                               |   |
| <b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>  |                               |   |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>OTTO FAJEN</b>   |                               | PHONE NUMBER:<br><b>573-634-3202</b>    |
| REPRESENTING:<br><b>MISSOURI NEA</b>   |                               | TITLE:<br><b>LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR</b>   |
| ADDRESS:<br><b>1810 EAST ELM STREET</b>  |                               |   |
| CITY:<br><b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>   |                               | STATE:<br><b>MO</b>                     |
|  |                               | ZIP:<br><b>65101</b>                    |
| EMAIL:<br><b>otto.fajen@mnea.org</b>   | ATTENDANCE:<br><b>Written</b> | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021 7:06 AM</b> |

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

**Missouri NEA Testimony on HB 541 to the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee March 2, 2021**

The Association appreciates the opportunity to present written testimony regarding HB 541. The Association opposes the bill as filed. The Association believes that every child deserves a safe place to learn, with the facilities needed to prepare each child for a challenging future. Missouri NEA also believes that every child deserves highly qualified teachers. HB 541 would identify schools scoring in the bottom five percent for three or more years under the state’s ESSA plan and specify that district-operated schools in this category would be subject to closure, reconstitution as a charter school or require funding of pupil transfers to other districts or charter schools. Issues of equity of opportunity can arise in schools and districts across the state. Many of the schools that have been on this list since ESSA was adopted have been charter schools. The Association suggests that whether a school is operated by a district or a charter, similar efforts to promote equity of opportunity should apply. MNEA further suggests that there is no evidence that turning more schools into charter schools will help address these issues. If the intent is to use the ESSA identification to help provide equity of opportunity to students in struggling schools, there are alternative approaches that seem more promising. The key is to identify the real issues and address them at the most effective level. A promising example would be for identified schools to include student surveys regarding their perceptions of educational equity as a starting point. The bill could also require or speak to other school-level and district-wide efforts to promote educational equity. Schools can adjust classroom assignments and provide opportunities for student-to-student mentoring, just to mention a few examples. Districts can realign attendance zones or feeder school assignments or allow student transfers within the district. On behalf of the Association, I thank you for the opportunity to offer our testimony on this bill. Otto Fajen MNEA Legislative Director



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

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| BILL NUMBER:<br><b>HB 541</b>  |             | DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021</b>                 |                      |
| COMMITTEE:<br><b>Elementary and Secondary Education</b>  |             |  |                      |
| <b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES |             |  |                      |
| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |             |  |                      |
| <b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>  |             |  |                      |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>RON BERRY</b>  |             | PHONE NUMBER:<br><b>660-537-2239</b>     |                      |
| REPRESENTING:<br><b>AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS</b>  |             | TITLE:                                   |                      |
| ADDRESS:<br><b>P.O. BOX 722</b>  |             |  |                      |
| CITY:<br><b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>   |             | STATE:<br><b>MO</b>                      | ZIP:<br><b>65102</b> |
| EMAIL:   | ATTENDANCE: | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021 12:00 AM</b> |                      |
| <b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>  |             |  |                      |



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

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| BILL NUMBER:<br><b>HB 541</b>  |             | DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021</b>                 |
| COMMITTEE:<br><b>Elementary and Secondary Education</b>  |             |  |
| <b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES |             |  |
| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |             |  |
| <b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>  |             |  |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>SCOTT KIMBLE</b>   |             | PHONE NUMBER:                            |
| REPRESENTING:<br><b>MISSOURI ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS</b>  |             | TITLE:                                   |
| ADDRESS:<br><b>3550 AMAZONAS DRIVE</b>   |             |  |
| CITY:<br><b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>   |             | STATE:<br><b>MO</b>                      |
|  |             | ZIP:<br><b>65109</b>                     |
| EMAIL:   | ATTENDANCE: | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021 12:00 AM</b> |
| <b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>  |             |  |



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

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| BILL NUMBER:<br><b>HB 541</b>  |                               | DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021</b>                |
| COMMITTEE:<br><b>Elementary and Secondary Education</b>  |                               |   |
| <b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES |                               |   |
| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |                               |   |
| <b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>   |                               |   |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>SHANE WILLIAMSON</b>   |                               | PHONE NUMBER:                           |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:  |                               | TITLE:                                  |
| ADDRESS:   |                               |   |
| CITY:  |                               | STATE:      ZIP:                        |
| EMAIL:<br><b>williamsonsy@yahoo.com</b>  | ATTENDANCE:<br><b>Written</b> | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021 8:29 AM</b> |
| <b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>  |                               |   |

Greetings, As a Webster Groves School District employee, I strongly oppose this bill. Our students are not failing! Our students are making great progress and starting in 2021-2022 --our middle school will change to 6th - 8th grades. In addition, my position (Director of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion) was created to help address equity challenges. Schools are multilayered and it is wrong and unfair to label a school or a child as "failing." This bill pushes charter schools, but look how many charter schools are on the list! There is no proof that charter schools do a better job of educating challenging students. Charter school boards are not elected by the public and are often run by private companies. As a result, our community members will have less influence over the quality of their schools. Our community and board of education are very involved and do a phenomenal job keeping students first. Please vote NO!



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

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|--|-------------|--|----------------------|
| BILL NUMBER:<br><b>HB 541</b>  |             | DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021</b>                 |                      |
| COMMITTEE:<br><b>Elementary and Secondary Education</b>  |             |  |                      |
| <b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES |             |  |                      |
| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |             |  |                      |
| <b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>  |             |  |                      |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>SHAWN RHOADS</b>   |             | PHONE NUMBER:                            |                      |
| REPRESENTING:<br><b>MISSOURI SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION</b>   |             | TITLE:                                   |                      |
| ADDRESS:<br><b>2100 SOUTHWEST 1-70</b>   |             |  |                      |
| CITY:<br><b>COLUMBIA</b>   |             | STATE:<br><b>MO</b>                      | ZIP:<br><b>65201</b> |
| EMAIL:   | ATTENDANCE: | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021 12:00 AM</b> |                      |
| <b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>  |             |  |                      |



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

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| BILL NUMBER:<br><b>HB 541</b>  |                               | DATE:<br><b>3/2/2021</b>                |                      |
| COMMITTEE:<br><b>Elementary and Secondary Education</b>  |                               |   |                      |
| <b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES |                               |   |                      |
| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |                               |   |                      |
| <b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>  |                               |   |                      |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>VICKI HANSON</b>   |                               | PHONE NUMBER:<br><b>636-212-0949</b>    |                      |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:<br><b>FOX C-6 SCHOOL BOARD</b>   |                               | TITLE:<br><b>PRESIDENT</b>              |                      |
| ADDRESS:<br><b>5001 FAWN CIRCLE</b>  |                               |   |                      |
| CITY:<br><b>IMPERIAL</b>   |                               | STATE:<br><b>MO</b>                     | ZIP:<br><b>63052</b> |
| EMAIL:<br><b>hansonv@foxc6.org</b>   | ATTENDANCE:<br><b>Written</b> | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/1/2021 4:11 PM</b> |                      |

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

As President of the Fox C-6 Board of Education, I'm writing to express our opposition to HB 541. This bill unfairly places requirements on public school districts that are not being required of charter schools. There were many charter school buildings on the list of low performing schools. The bill does not provide any consequences to those schools. It is also important to note the the bill has the support of Opportunity Trust, which is a private entity that has been promoting charter schools and is funded by out of state interests. These for profit organizations are the ones that will gain by the expansion of charter schools. Charter school boards are not elected by the public and the community. Their goal is to make a profit for the private organization. Our students and our public schools will lose. There is no data to support the theory that charter schools do a better job of educating our students. The achievement results do not show this. The Fox C-6 school district has 2 schools that are on the list of low performing schools. On reviewing the data this is in large part due to our fairly large population (15-16%) of special education students. Public schools are being punished for doing what they do best - serving ALL students. Many of our students participate in school work programs to prepare them for jobs in the community, so that they can become tax paying citizens and good neighbors. Typically they are unable to perform at the same level on the EOC exams. Our schools are not failing, we are working to meet the needs of all students, with college, career and work programs. We work to ensure Success in Life. I know of a high school senior, with a disability, who attends school for core content and on the job work experience for part of the day. This is exactly what this individual student needs. When he graduates, he will continue to work and be successful. While this is only 1 example of success, I can assure you that there are many more. I urge you to vote no on this bill



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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| COMMITTEE:<br><b>Elementary and Secondary Education</b>  |                               |  |
| <b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES |                               |  |
| <b>WITNESS NAME</b>  |                               |  |
| <b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>  |                               |  |
| WITNESS NAME:<br><b>YOLANDA CARGILE</b>  |                               | PHONE NUMBER:<br><b>816-349-3312</b>     |
| BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:<br><b>CENTER SCHOOL DISTRICT</b>   |                               | TITLE:<br><b>SUPERINTENDENT</b>          |
| ADDRESS:<br><b>8701 HOLMES RD</b>  |                               |  |
| CITY:<br><b>KANSAS CITY</b>  | STATE:<br><b>MO</b>           | ZIP:<br><b>64137</b>                     |
| EMAIL:<br><b>ycargile@center.k12.mo.us</b>   | ATTENDANCE:<br><b>Written</b> | SUBMIT DATE:<br><b>3/1/2021 10:45 AM</b> |

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

The provisions in HB541 would be detrimental to students in Center School District. It calls for closing schools that have been in the bottom 5% of state performance for three years. This would impact one of our schools, Center Elementary. We continue to address student needs and provide professional development for staff with a priority focus on student achievement. Our staff has worked very hard to understand Center Elementary student performance as compared to our other schools that use the same processes. As we searched for root causes, we found two distinguishing traits at Center Elementary; a very high mobility rate in our student population and a very high rate of trauma experienced by the students in that building. We do not cite that data to excuse lack of performance, but to help identify how we need to work differently to help students succeed. At the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, all our staff at Center Elementary participated in intensive Trauma Informed Care training, which resulted in immediate benefits in classroom environment (including a 30% reduction in discipline referrals due to disruptive behavior). We expect that to translate to improved academic performance over time. We are pleased to receive a grant award from DESE for the Center Elementary staff to participate in the Comprehensive Literacy State Development program. This will provide our staff with access to the best resources in the State to develop targeted approaches to improve reading abilities of our students. In short, programs are in place that will help our students overcome their life challenges and propel Center Elementary to much stronger performance. For students whose lives are filled with instability, closing their neighborhood school would be the worst possible response from their community. While supporters cite many examples of effective charter schools, there are also many ineffective charter schools with little accountability for their performance. When you look at root causes of low academic performance, the primary causes are usually related to transience and trauma experienced by kids. Closing public schools and moving those kids to charter schools will not solve those problems. Additional points I feel should be shared regarding HB541: 1. Center School District students are not failing. 2. There is no proof that charter schools do a better job of educating struggling or challenging students. 3. Charter school boards are not elected by the public and are often run by private companies; which means our community members will have less influence over the quality of our schools. For these reasons, I oppose HB541. Sincerely, Yolanda Cargile Superintendent for Center School District