



January 12, 2024

The Honorable Mike Wilson
Kentucky State Senator, District 32
702 Capitol Avenue, Room 242
Kentucky Capitol Annex Building
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Senator Wilson:

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence applauds your work and the efforts of the Kentucky Senate Majority in recent sessions to strengthen education outcomes for Kentucky students. Initiatives that moved the needle included providing funding for full day kindergarten, research-based approaches to literacy instruction, and key investments in the Commonwealth's postsecondary system.

We share your commitment to ensuring all Kentucky students are put on the path to a larger life through increased educational outcomes. A key component in ensuring success for Kentucky students is the ability of the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) to make decisions in the best interests of students and schools irrespective of partisan considerations.

The Prichard Committee is concerned that [Senate Bill 8](#) could dilute the cross-sectional voice of Kentuckians rather than increase education outcomes. The law ([20 RS SB 10](#)) championed by Senate President Robert Stivers, which the Prichard Committee supported in the 2020 legislative session, mandates equal representation for all Kentuckians in the selection of board members. When a gubernatorial appointment occurs, there is to be no reference given to occupation of the appointee, no appointment to a then-current educator to ensure against misaligned personal interest in state affairs, equal representation of genders, proportional representation of the two political parties and/or political affiliations of members, and appointments are to reflect the minority racial composition of the state.

Senate Bill 8 would place Kentucky in the [minority of states](#) with only seven states and the District of Columbia requiring elected state boards of education, five of which are partisan. There is no clear evidence that an elected school board translates to better outcomes for students.

In 1989 when Kentucky began its climb from 49th in education outcomes, it turned away from partisanship. The 1989 Kentucky Supreme Court Case, [Rose v. Council for a Better Education, Inc.](#), required the Kentucky General Assembly to "assure [common schools] are operated with no waste, no duplication, no mismanagement, and with no political influence." Our concern is that Senate Bill 8 could turn Kentucky back towards the past and away from the gains that have been made since the *Rose* decision.

At Prichard, we are far from satisfied with the current educational attainment of our students, but Senate Bill 8 is not poised to improve those outcomes. We appreciate the opportunity to share our concerns with you and stand ready to assist you in growing education outcomes for Kentucky's students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brigitte Blom". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Brigitte Blom
President & CEO
Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence

Building a Groundswell for a Big, Bold Future

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