



February 2, 2016

Erick Vaughn, Executive Director Kansas Head Start Association

Testimony for House Appropriations Committee on HB 2577 (KEY/CIF Changes)

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Head Start Association (KHS) appreciates the opportunity to express our opposition to the proposed change to the CIF funding structure. The proposed change would put funding that supports high quality early childhood programs in Kansas at a greater risk for budget cuts and sweeps, ultimately eliminating existing protections to funding that supports Kansas' youngest and most vulnerable citizens.

KHS's opposition to the changes in the CIF comes not just from being an advocacy organization that works to make Kansas the best state to raise a child, but also as an Early Childhood Block Grantee (ECBG) with experience competing for grant funds and being held accountable by the Children's Cabinet for those precious dollars.

KHS has been awarded an Early Childhood Block Grant since 2009. Our project, the Early Learning Communities, supports the challenging collaborative work of implementing 26 integrated preschool classrooms serving more than 620 children and their families in 11 communities. Our collaborative grant has implemented and sustained collaborations with 9 school districts, 10 Head Start programs, and many other early childhood programs and agencies in 11 communities. Putting the CIF at greater risk for cuts means putting our grant project at a greater risk for cuts, along with the many other high quality early childhood programs funded by the CIF throughout the state. It would mean putting the children, their families, and their communities at a greater risk for cuts to programs that are essential to supporting collaborations that work to improve the lives of Kansans at the greatest risk.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the committee members keep the promise made to Kansas children more than a decade ago and oppose changes to the funding structure of the KEY Fund and the CIF that would put this funding at greater risk for no reason.