



THE CIVIC COUNCIL OF GREATER KANSAS CITY

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**Testimony of
John J. Sherman, Board Chair
In Opposition to SB 389's transfer of revenue from the Children's Initiative Fund
Committee on Ways and Means
February 3, 2016**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee:

The Civic Council of Greater Kansas City appears today with concerns about the funding of Children's Initiative Fund programs in SB389.

The Civic Council is an organization of 75 CEOs of the largest employers in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Throughout its 50-year history, the Civic Council has supported initiatives that contribute to the community's quality of life and economic well-being. A hallmark of the Civic Council is its commitment to a long-term agenda that is strategic and informed by research.

The Civic Council supported the Children's Initiative Fund at its inception because of the continuity of funding it provided and the accountability that was built into its review of programs it funded. This review process has ensured that programs meet the goals of healthy child development, strong families and early learning skills, the essential ingredients to preparing children with the lifelong skills necessary to be successful in the workforce.

As an independent organization led by civic and business leaders, we appreciate the value of child-focused programs funded through an entity comprised of professionals knowledgeable of and dedicated to the unique challenges of our most vulnerable Kansans. Other state agencies may also have similarly talented professionals, but the Children's Initiative Fund has brought a strategic, coordinated and responsive approach to recognizing needs, identifying the most appropriate solutions and evaluating the results. We believe the Children's Initiative Fund is the state's best mechanism to be a unique and important resource for the education, mental health, and well-being of children, while remaining responsive to changes in the environment and the needs for accountability to both the legislature and the citizens.

The Civic Council of Greater Kansas City respectfully urges you to fund the programs at the same level and manner as they are currently supported through the Children's Initiative Fund in order to ensure the children of Kansas are provided quality early childhood programs.

Thank you.