



Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children

February 23, 2023

Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation

Chairperson Tyson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for taking the time to hear testimony regarding SB 164. I am providing written comments on behalf of the Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children (KSAEYC) as a proponent of this bill. KSAEYC is the state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and our mission is to promote high quality learning experiences for children birth through age 8.

This bill will allow qualified early childhood educators, who often make low wages and work without health care benefits or retirement plans, a tax break of \$2000. While this may seem minimal to some, this is a significant benefit to a profession that has been historically undervalued. This bill would be a tool to encourage others to enter the field, supporting the current childcare workforce issue.

High-quality early childhood education plays a vital role in fostering a strong economy, and supporting the workforce of both today and tomorrow. There is an essential need for a strong early childhood workforce with appropriate compensation. Bold investments are necessary to establish and maintain a strong workforce with compensation that benefit the children they serve. In the absence of these investments, we remain in a detrimental cycle – low professional pay leads to high turnover in the workforce, which leads to greater scarcity of care and lower-quality early childhood programs. Ultimately, it leads to disruptive experiences for families and children at the exact time in their lives that consistency is critical for optimal development.

This bill does not solve the childcare crisis we are facing, but it does give value to educators and provides them with a monetary incentive to work in or enter the early childhood field, moving us in the right direction for future bills. It supports NAEYC's mission "to advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children."

KSAEYC identifies that this bill should include **all** licensed providers, at childcare centers and family and group childcare homes. Family childcare providers make up a large portion of the provider demographic and it is necessary to include them in this bill. Each of these groups support our workforce, and we must include them as part of an economic development strategy.

Thank you to the Committee on Assessment and Taxation for taking the time to read my testimony in support of SB 164. Please do not hesitate to reach out if I can answer any questions or provide additional information to the Committee on this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tristen Cope".

Tristen Cope  
KSAEYC President