

March 20, 2017

Amanda Gress, Director of Government Relations
Kansas Action for Children
Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 2385
House Taxation Committee

Chairman Johnson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to House Bill 2385. Kansas Action for Children's vision is to make Kansas the best state to raise a child, and our organization shapes health, education, and economic policies that benefit Kansas children and their families. The state's tax policy choices determine whether Kansas can meet the needs of children. Policies implemented since 2012 have weakened programs that serve Kansas children while undermining the financial well-being of working families. House Bill 2385 would disproportionately impact low- and moderate-income Kansas children and families, and we encourage policymakers to instead adopt a comprehensive tax reform that raises sufficient revenue to meet the needs of Kansas children.

Kansas children deserve fair tax policy. A flat tax would shift the tax responsibility onto working Kansans, asking low-income families with children to pay more. Under current tax policy, everyday Kansans already pay higher taxes relative to their incomes than the wealthiest in our state. A flat tax structure would exacerbate this unfairness.

House Bill 2385 does not meet the needs of Kansas children. Since 2011, Kansas has cut more than \$100 million dollars from children's health and early childhood education programs. House Bill 2385 would not restore the state's long-term fiscal health. As we've seen over the last four years, unbalanced tax policy hurts the state's ability to invest in the programs and services that ensure children and families in our state can thrive. Any tax proposal that does not close the state's structural budget gap inhibits our future ability to invest in Kansas kids.

There are better choices for children and families. Instead of adopting a flat tax, Kansas policymakers should take this opportunity to enact comprehensive tax reform that restores revenues, closes the structural gap, and allows Kansas to reinvest in our children. After nine rounds of budget cuts, it is time for the state to fix the failed tax policy at the root of this problem – not compound the damage. **We urge the committee to reject House Bill 2385 and instead focus on the path forward by enacting comprehensive tax reform.**

720 SW Jackson | Suite 201
Topeka, KS 66603

P: 785-232-0550 | F: 785-232-0699
kac@kac.org | www.kac.org

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