

March 15, 2017

Amanda Gress, Director of Government Relations
Kansas Action for Children
Written Testimony in Opposition to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 1602
Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

Chair Tyson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 1602. 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, and policies implemented since 2012 have weakened programs that serve Kansas children while undermining the financial well-being of working families. Adopting SCR 1602 would compound the damage, capping critical investments in Kansas children and permanently undermining our state's fiscal health.

Kansas children cannot afford to pay for deep budget cuts. The state's budget crisis has already caused major budget cuts that affect children; since 2011, Kansas has cut more than \$100 million dollars from children's health and early childhood education programs. As a result Kansas is struggling to meet our state's children's needs. For example, Early Head Start serves just 7.5% of all poor Kansas children, and Head Start serves just 43% of all poor children. SCR 1602's formulaic cap would prevent the state from reinvesting in Kansas children once the budget situation stabilizes, and instead force further cuts to core services like schools and healthcare.

Kansas policymakers should address the state's current fiscal challenges instead of initiating a risky new tax experiment. The Kansas Legislature has a window of opportunity to enact comprehensive tax reform that permanently solves the state's budget challenges. SCR 1602 does not move the Legislature closer to achieving that goal: it does not make the state tax system fairer, nor does it change the cost of providing state services. This measure represents a radical new tax policy that would jeopardize our state's future fiscal health and stability. After nine rounds of budget cuts, three credit ratings downgrades, and record-high levels of debt, it is time for state legislators to fix our structural budget imbalance.

Although 34 other states have debated similar measures, only Colorado has adopted this kind of extreme limitation – a decision that subsequently wreaked havoc on state investments in schools, higher education, health, and other core services. Kansas should not follow down this dangerous path. **We urge Kansas legislators to reject SCR 1602 and instead focus on enacting comprehensive tax reform to balance the state's budget.**

720 SW Jackson | Suite 201
Topeka, KS 66603

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

Shaping policy that puts children first

President & CEO
Annie McKay

Board of Directors
Prisca Barnes
Jeffrey Colvin, MD
Ximena Garcia, MD
Terrie Huntington
Susan Jack
Lt. Kelvin Johnson
Angie Knackstedt, BSN, RN-BC
Melinda Lewis, LMSW
Stephanie Makalous
Francis Mascarenhas
Sarah Mays
Chad Moore, JD, MHA
Christina Ostmeyer
Marty Rombold
Jamie Schmaltz
Dale Walker, PhD