



Testimony re: Kansas House Bill 2094
Senate Ways and Means Committee

March 25, 2021

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

My name is Wendy Doyle, and I am the President and CEO of United WE. The mission of United WE is to advance all women's economic and civic leadership.

Our organization is pleased to support House Bill 2094, which as amended, adds to the Wartime Veteran and First Responder Survivors' Educational Opportunities. This important legislation expands an education fund for spouses and family members of individuals that died, and now includes individuals injured in the line of duty. The opportunity allows for up to \$350,000 to be awarded per year and United WE sees this as a step in the right direction to support the dignity and livelihood of survivors and families of these heroes.

Our support of this legislation is based on objective research findings. Our "Project Diane" study focused on the integration of women into leadership positions in the U.S. Army Special Forces. Additionally, "The Status of Women in Kansas," focused on economic development indicators and developing a baseline to monitor Kansas' progress to advance women's economic and civic leadership. We will unveil updated findings to this research project this summer. United WE believes House Bill 2094 is core to overcoming the challenges and building on the opportunities illuminated by both studies.

The expansion of the educational opportunity for wartime veteran and first responder survivors would greatly benefit Kansas military and first responder families – women and men – by giving the children and spouses of veterans or first responders killed or injured in the line of duty with the opportunity to get a higher education without the stress of paying tuition or going into debt. Investing in their families' ability to fully participate in the workforce is a fitting tribute to those individuals who chose to serve their communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective with you. We applaud efforts, like the Wartime Survivors and First Responders Act, that recognize the holistic, and often long term, sacrifices made by the state's military and first responder families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy D. Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wendy D. Doyle
President and CEO
United WE