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February 20, 2024

Brenda Bandy
Executive Director, Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition
Written-Only Proponent Testimony for HB 2687
House Committee on Taxation

Chairman Smith and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of HB 2687, which would establish a state child tax credit.

The Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition is a statewide non-profit working to improve breastfeeding support in Kansas. Over 90% of Kansas families choose to breastfeed. The short and long-term health benefits are clear, making breastfeeding a win-win-win for mom, baby, and society. Yet fewer than one in five babies in Kansas are breastfeeding exclusively at six months of age, as recommended by medical professionals.

That is because breastfeeding after returning to work is hard. Too many new moms must return to work too soon after giving birth because they need the money to pay rent and put food on the table. This is where a state child tax credit could help. The \$600 credit for families earning less than \$25,000 a year equals 82 hours at work for those earning minimum wage. This equals two weeks at home with their newborn baby. We know those two weeks are priceless.

The cost of caring for a newborn baby can be surprising. A \$600 tax credit for breastfeeding families means three or more visits to the lactation consultant or a year's supply of breast milk storage bags. Both items are rarely covered by insurance. The same \$600 will pay for *only one month* of infant formula for babies not being breastfed. Working and paying for newborn expenses can be stressful for families.

The state child tax credit would go a long way toward reducing stress on families in Kansas. Less stress on parents means better mental and physical health for everyone in the family. Research also shows it reduces the risk of child abuse and neglect.

Parents and caregivers work hard for their kids. HB 2687 would return money to these hard-working Kansans so they can decide how best to care for their families.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information with you. If I can be of further assistance, please contact me at bbandy@ksbreastfeeding.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenda Bandy".

Brenda Bandy, IBCLC
Executive Director
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition

Mission To improve the health and well-being of Kansans by working collaboratively to promote, protect and support breastfeeding/human milk feeding.

Vision Breastfeeding/human milk feeding is normal and supported throughout Kansas.