

ShaMecha King Simms
Topeka, Kansas 66606
sl.simms@yahoo.com

February 14, 2023

Adam Smith, Chair, House Committee on Taxation
Committee Assistant: Lea Gerard
Subject: Written testimony in OPPOSITION to House Bill No. 2061
House Committee on Taxation, February 14, 2023

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Committee on Taxation:

My name is ShaMecha King Simms, I am a 15-year resident of the city of Topeka and a 25+ year resident of the state of Kansas.

With the exception of the time that I was home with my son, I have always been able to maintain gainful employment and what I determined to be a reasonable standard of living based on what I wanted out of life. However, as I have aged, and especially with the help of COVID-19 pushing back the curtains on inequity, I am increasingly understanding how the abject and working poor (both growing in numbers) are pervasively used to justify both spending cuts that reduces access to helpful programs/initiatives; and absorption of an inordinate amount of taxes when the distribution rarely makes it back to their households.

I am offering testimony in opposition to House Bill 2061 because of the direct impact it will have on the people I represent and as a SURVIVOR of the long list of Brownback-era fiscal faux pas.

It is distressing, to say the least, that I have to take time out of my day to ask members of this committee to think of their less well-heeled constituents. It is disrespectful to presume that Kansans have forgotten how close we were to the edge. Educators were dismissed from their positions; students were stuffed into larger classes without the resources they needed to be successful, and school districts struggled to determine if they would even pay their remaining teachers into the summer months. Infrastructure repairs and projects went unaddressed or shelved. The state's budget was the headline for months straight and a cautionary tale for other states.

I really appreciated what my Tennessee Town NIA and Citizen Advisory Council colleague, Michael Bell asked in his assessment of this bill:

"When it comes to tax policy, we should ask decision makers at least five questions:

1. What will the tax accomplish?
2. Is the tax necessary?
3. Who will the tax hit hardest?
4. Can we live with that?

5. Do alternatives exist?”

If this committee cannot, in good conscience, come to the heart of working poor establishments; schools; and neighborhoods and justify their choices, while similarly attacking, devaluing, and projecting the cause of all that is wrong with society on their existence for not having “enough” – or making “more of themselves” – it would be wise to let this abomination of a tax bill return to the depths from which it spawned from.

Vote NO on House Bill No. 2061.

Respectfully,

ShaMecha King Simms
Historic Old Town NIA President
Citizen Advisory Council 2023 Chair
Central Topeka Grocery Oasis Founding Board Member