

## Testimony of Meredith Sleichter

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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Meredith Sleichter. I am the Executive Director of the Eisenhower Foundation. The Eisenhower Foundation was formed in 1945 after the Allied victory in Europe to create a memorial to General Eisenhower. The Boyhood Home was opened by the Foundation in 1947. The Museum was opened by the Foundation in 1954. Public and private entities raised \$3.5 million to build the Library, which opened in 1962. Today, five buildings on 22 acres comprise the campus. In addition to providing private-sector support to this campus, the Eisenhower Foundation offers IKEducation, which offers free programs for Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. The Eisenhower Foundation also offers Ike's Soldiers, which honors Dwight D. Eisenhower's legacy through the personal accounts of the soldiers he led.

I am here to offer testimony in support of extending the tax credits set to expire in 2025. Specifically, I am requesting that the bill be amended to include the Eisenhower Foundation. Since their inception in 2021, these tax credits have been instrumental in allowing the Eisenhower Foundation to partner with the private sector, generating \$875,500 in donations that benefit Kansas students.

These tax credits have had a two-fold impact. They have encouraged new donors to support our mission while also enabling existing donors to augment their annual contributions. As a result, we have expanded our reach and strengthened our ability to provide valuable educational programming.

Through these tax credits, we have served 39,500 K-12 students across Kansas, offering crucial access to IKEducation programs that teach civic education and history through the lens of Dwight D. Eisenhower's leadership, character, and service. Each of these programs meets or exceeds state and national learning standards, ensuring that students have the opportunity to receive high-quality educational experiences that prepare them for engaged citizenship.

Recently, a Derby teacher said, *"The whole day was wonderful!!! The leaders were terrific; the Museum was wonderful, researching in the archives was a super experience for those boys, the space race deal was awesome, lunch was so generous and delicious--I didn't get to go to the Boyhood home, but the kids who did loved that, too!!"*

Recently, Kansan Courtney Wilson said, *"Thank you so much for such a fun and engaging webinar today! As a homeschooling family we do webinars like this from time to time but today's was by far the best we've done. Bravo! We're studying US history this year and so this perfectly supplements our curriculum. My 10 year old was not looking forward to the webinar but was*

*engaged the whole time and is excited to make his own campaign video. And we're all excited to visit the Eisenhower Presidential Library again soon!"*

Additionally, recent reductions in Federal funding have resulted in the loss of National Archives and Records Administration employees who serve the Eisenhower Library and Museum. While these employees are funded by a separate Federal source, it will place additional importance on our volunteers and the Foundation's efforts as we continue to educate students.

Extending the tax credits through 2036 will allow us to continue this important work, providing students with a deeper understanding of history, civic engagement and leadership while fostering private-sector support for education in Kansas. We urge the committee to support this extension so that we can sustain and expand these critical opportunities for Kansas students.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions you may have.