



PO Box 654
Lawrence, KS 66044
(913) 232-2336

<https://kansasinterfaithaction.org>
mrieber@kansasinterfaithaction.org

Rabbi Moti Rieber, Executive Director
Rev. Rachael Pryor, Board Chair

Written Testimony by Rabbi Moti Rieber in Opposition to HB 2457 – Flat Tax Bill
House Committee on Taxation, Rep. Adam Smith, Chair
March 21, 2023

Mr. Chair, members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. My name is Rabbi Moti Rieber; I am executive director of Kansas Interfaith Action, a statewide, multi-faith issue-advocacy organization that “puts faith into action” by educating, engaging and advocating on behalf of people of faith and the public regarding critical social, economic and climate justice issues. I write today in opposition to HB2457.

The first and most important role of state government is to ensure that the people of our state have what they need to survive and thrive. This includes fully funded public schools; a functioning social safety net without onerous wait lists; capacity to respond to disasters; upgraded IT for our departments, to name just a few. These are not optional; they are requirements -- the absolute least that the state must do – a sacred trust between Kansans and our state government.

It was only a little over 10 years ago that Kansas embarked on an ill-considered and unwise course of income tax cuts. The damage that “experiment” caused – to our public education system, to the functioning of our state government, to the health and well-being of our residents – was profound, and we have only recently succeeded in putting this failure behind us. The last thing we need right now is a massive experiment with a new tax system that would amount to another round of tax cuts to primarily benefit the wealthiest 20% and would also blow a hole in the state budget. This would destroy the state’s ability to sustain the services and programs that Kansas families rely on. We’ve been down this road before.

We support the graduated income tax is the best way we have to make sure that our system is funded more by the people who benefit from it more. We have long held that the best way to make our tax system fairer would be to reinstate the fourth bracket. We oppose any flat tax as a boondoggle that would benefit the best-off among us and bankrupt the state. Although we approve of eliminating of the food sales tax more quickly, here it is being used to sweeten a bill that is far too damaging to be passed, and should be dealt with in a separate bill.

This legislature’s highest priority should be guaranteeing the functioning of state government and the well-being of our citizens – funding public education, funding necessary services, and caring for our neighbors. The flat tax is a boondoggle that will benefit the best-off among us at the expense of the state’s ability to function for everyone else. Please vote against HB 2457.