



United Way of Kaw Valley

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February 20, 2024

Jessica Lehnerr
United Way of Kaw Valley
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.

United Way of Kaw Valley serves a four-county region – Shawnee, Douglas, Jackson, and Jefferson – in northeast Kansas. We work with cross-sector partners and donors to create an unbreakable network of support for a strong, healthy, and equitable community. We live into this vision through grantmaking, collaborating, and convening stakeholders around issues that are too complex for any one program, agency, or government to handle on their own. Recently, we have added a whole family lens to our work and are applying a 2-generation approach to our grantmaking and convening. This approach calls for serving both the adults and the children in a family in intentional and coordinated ways to break the cycle of poverty. This approach requires the coordination of diverse economic supports for families including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) which are proven family stabilization tools.

We know that our work at the local level – grantmaking and process improvement, convening and collaboration – requires policy support at all levels. Effective city and county policies are needed to improve local ecosystems. State policies are crucial to the upward mobility and success of families in our counties. With limited childcare slots and low unemployment numbers in our region, we, like other Kansas communities, are facing a workforce crisis. Key sectors like manufacturing, healthcare, and education are experiencing worker shortages and diminished capacity. This reduces productivity, and, in some cases, this affects the availability and quality of services.

A state child tax credit would provide much needed relief to families served through our programs. A mother without transportation in south Topeka could afford the car purchase that not only gets her to and from work at the Walmart distribution center but also provides her with a means to take her



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young disabled son to and from doctor visits. A father working two jobs could afford the resources and tuition to finish his certification at Washburn Tech, providing him with the welding skills needed to increase his pay and provide more for his family. A child tax credit would mean a significant economic boost to working families who don't make enough to make ends meet most months.

Thank you for your consideration of a state child tax credit for Kansas families. Your work on this bill could mean more Kansas families are going to work and providing for themselves.

Should you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance, you can reach me at jlehnherr@uwkawvalley.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica Lehnerr".

Jessica Lehnerr
President & CEO
United Way of Kaw Valley