



METL is a regional coalition of the Manhattan, Emporia, Topeka, and Lawrence Chambers of Commerce, which seeks to leverage the combined strength of nearly 3,000 member businesses and organizations, represented by 30 elected representatives and senators in our region.

Written statement in support of Senate Bill 164
Mike Matson, Manhattan Area Chamber on behalf of METL
Wednesday, March 1, 2023
Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation

The METL Coalition, consisting of Chambers of Commerce in Manhattan, Emporia, Topeka and Lawrence, supports the passage of Senate Bill 164, which would provide a \$2000 tax credit for qualified employees of licensed child care facilities.

The current childcare dilemma hits families from many directions. Childcare facilities are struggling to fully staff their centers with qualified employees. Professional staffing shortages directly impact the number of children they can serve. In addition, child care expenses can undercut the economic benefits of returning to work, especially for lower-wage workers.

The childcare challenges experienced by centers, families, and providers are defined by a low supply of childcare workers and what is becoming a chronic shortage of affordable childcare options for families. This has created a dilemma where working parents are forced into making difficult family budget and career choices.

Before the 2023 legislative session, state lawmakers from the four METL coalition communities participated in a Child Care Summit in Topeka, where they heard from subject matter experts who drove home the challenges.

The METL Childcare Summit was designed as an awareness-building effort and legislators in attendance were encouraged to explore creative solutions to the lack of available childcare which is presenting significant hardships for many families as they navigate the post-pandemic workplace. If passed, Senate Bill 164 will be a big step in easing that burden.

If enacted into state law, we believe Senate Bill 164 will provide a tangible benefit to helping ease what has become an enormous hardship for many Kansas parents and businesses.