

El Centro



SU CONEXIÓN A LA COMUNIDAD

To: Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation
From: Erica Andrade, President/CEO, El Centro, Inc
Address: 650 Minnesota Ave. KCK 66101
Date: February 3, 2023
Re: SB 377– Support

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of SB 377, which proposes effective and tangible ways to support Kansans, especially children and families. SB 377 eliminates the state sales tax on groceries by April 1, 2024, the sales tax on diapers and feminine hygiene products, and state taxes on Social Security income. It also doubles the Child and Dependent Care Tax credit and creates a back-to-school sales tax holiday. There are other actions as well, all of which immediately save Kansans money.

El Centro supports this effort on behalf of the most vulnerable residents in Wyandotte and Johnson counties. El Centro firmly believes in our mission, *“Strengthening communities and improving lives of Latinos and others through educational, social and economic opportunities.”* A significant part of meeting our mission is to address topics such as food insecurity and economic hardships that directly impact the health of our families.

The residents we serve are mostly low-income working families living on limited budgets. We know that families living with low wages spend a higher share of their income on items such as groceries, diapers, and clothing than many others. In Kansas, the lowest 20% of earners are spending over 20% of their household budgets on food. This means there is no room for savings and for some, the inability to buy enough food to sustain a healthy balanced diet for their children.

Eliminating the state food tax alone saves a family of four over \$500 a year, SB 377 wastes no time making this a reality for families. Imagine the savings for families if we also eliminate sales tax on diapers, and feminine hygiene items, and create a tax-free holiday. This is money that immediately stays with families. The daily savings may only add up to a few dollars, but those few dollars can cover the costs of a bag of clementines, a dozen eggs, or a gallon of milk.

El Centro participates in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. Just last week at a training, several participants were shocked to learn Kansas collects tax on Social Security income. After years of working hard, those who receive Social Security should not have to worry whether their limited income will be enough to cover basic needs such as groceries and medication.

While there are many benefits to SB 377, these are just a few examples of how it would help Kansans, including the community we serve. To make the state of Kansas more responsive to our most vulnerable, we support SB 377. Thank you again for your consideration of this bill and the opportunity to testify on behalf of many Kansans. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


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