

To: Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation
From: Michelle McCormick, Executive Director KCSDV
Re: Proponent Testimony for SB 377 – Written-Only
Date: January 31, 2024

Chairperson Tyson and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) is a nonprofit organization located in Topeka with 25 member organizations providing direct services to victims of sexual and domestic violence statewide. These are the programs that provide critical services to survivors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and include emergency shelter, hotline support, counseling, and other supportive services.

KCSDV is a proponent of SB 377, a plan to cut taxes for all Kansans including victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. One of the most critical issues for survivors in re-adjusting to a life without violence is stability...a stable job, stable housing, and stable health care. One of the biggest hinderances to establishing this stability is often a lack of access to economic resources.

We know that the most dangerous time for victims is when they choose to leave the relationship. Violence and abuse can escalate significantly during this time. This is also the time when most victims are most financially fraught. Financial abuse is one of the largest hurdles for victims attempting to leave their abuser. When victims are safety planning with local, trained advocates at our member organizations, the devastating impacts of limited access to financial resources on a survivor trying to establish themselves in a safe environment is seen everyday by advocates.

- The stairstep decrease in the food sales tax that is still being implemented, has been a much-needed cost savings for survivors and member organizations who provide food and shelter to survivors and their families. Eliminating the food tax immediately would provide essential financial relief now instead of waiting until 2025. With financial resources needing to go further now more than ever, savings in sales tax would allow more money to go to actual goods for victims and survivors.
- For many survivors, eliminating the sales tax for other necessities including children's diapers, feminine hygiene products, and providing an annual back-to-school sales tax holiday, would reduce the existing financial burden on survivors for these necessities for themselves and their children.
- The doubling of child and dependent care tax credits would provide financial relief for victims and survivors with children or dependents.
- Increasing the standard deduction for Kansas could mean victims and survivors pay less when filing their state income taxes.

- For victims and survivors receiving social security income, eliminating state taxes on this income would reduce the financial stress of getting reintegrated into a violence free life.
- Many victims and survivors get support from KCSDV member organizations without needing emergency shelter assistance. There are survivors who are homeowners or co-own homes with another – possibly their abuser. The increase to \$100,000 in the residential exemption on statewide property tax could give needed relief on their property tax bill.

All in all, it may not be apparent to some that this proposed plan would be identified as a “victim services issue” but given the significant connection between access to financial resources and achieving safety and stability, we hope that it becomes clear. For the reasons stated above, KCSDV is a proponent of SB 377 to cut taxes for all Kansans including victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle McCormick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michelle McCormick, LMSW
Executive Director
KCSDV