



United Community Services of Johnson County

Written-Only Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 377

Kristy Baughman, Executive Director of United Community Services of Johnson County

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Executive Director

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Kristy Baughman, Executive Director

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Chair Tyson and Members of the Committee on Assessment and Taxation:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 377, a bipartisan proposal which provides targeted tax relief to Kansans who need it. United Community Services of Johnson County (UCS) is a nonprofit agency that provides data analysis, leads collaborative planning, and mobilizes resources to enhance the availability and delivery of health and human services in Johnson County and the surrounding region. UCS is committed to supporting policies, programs, and services that are invested in the success of our community's most vital resource – its people.

[According to United Way's Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed \(ALICE\) model](#), 12% of Kansans live below the federal poverty level, which was \$24,860 for a household of 3 in 2023. An additional 27% of Kansans earn above the federal poverty level but not enough to afford the basics in the communities where they live. Altogether, 39% of **employed** Kansans aren't making enough money to pay for basic necessities. Meanwhile, the state has a record surplus; Kansas has the opportunity to provide tax relief for working families while also protecting appropriate expenditures.

SB 377 provides strategic, measured tax relief needed by working families and those on fixed incomes, while continuing to ensure adequate support of Kansas' critical services like education, transportation and infrastructure, and social services. SB 377's property tax relief combats rapidly rising home values, helping families, especially those on fixed incomes, stay housed. Exempting social security income from state income tax ensures fixed income residents retain their income *and* makes Kansas competitive with the 38 other states that don't tax social security income. Elimination of state food sales tax, the tax on diapers and feminine hygiene items, and the introduction of a back-to-school sales tax holiday provide relief for *all* Kansans with a greater impact for lower-income households, which spend a greater proportion of their income on necessities and, as a result, pay a higher portion of their income on sales taxes.

SB 377 also *doubles* the child and dependent care tax credit, which makes childcare more affordable and allows more caregivers into the workforce. Workforce development is a foremost consideration in Kansas. [The 2022 Status of Women in Kansas report](#) found that infant care at daycare centers in Kansas costs 1.3% *more* than in-state college tuition. It's no surprise that the lack of adequate and affordable childcare is the top reason caregivers give that they are not in the workforce.

SB 377 represents fiscally responsible measures to provide a tax break to all Kansans, with the greatest relief for Kansans who will benefit the most. When our lower and fixed-income families are making enough to pay for basic necessities, all Kansans benefit: businesses retain quality employees, caregivers participate fully in the workforce, retirees remain stably housed, local governments see fewer strains on law enforcement, hospitals, and philanthropic services, and children access quality care and education – building the workforce of tomorrow.