



Kansas Family Voice Testimony in Support of S.B. 498

Senate Assessment & Taxation

Brittany Jones

March 5, 2024

Chairwoman Tyson and members of the committee, my name is Brittany Jones. I am an attorney and the Director of Policy and Engagement for Kansas Family Voice. We represent thousands of members in Kansas who want to come alongside families and tangibly support them as they seek to care for and raise children. I am writing today to encourage you to support S.B. 498.

S.B. 498 provides real tangible benefits to mothers, children, and families from a host of different angles. It ensures that pregnancy resource centers who walk alongside pregnant women receive a sales tax exemption and those that donate to these vital organizations receive an appropriate tax benefit for contributing to this work. It also supports families who are seeking to adopt in Kansas and anyone who is having a child.

In Kansas, we do not have a specific child tax credit. While families may receive a federal child tax credit, there is not a corresponding one in Kansas. At least thirteen states have some sort of child tax credits.¹ These credits help create a financial buffer for families as they welcome children into the world. They help provide stability especially for low-income families. Ensuring families expecting a child receive this benefit as well can go a long way to preparing these families to welcome their new addition. These laws can be powerful tools in helping families with children in poverty.

The Adoption Tax Credit in this bill is also critically important to our state. Throughout society, children are waiting to be adopted into loving families. Adoptions can cost \$70,000 or more depending on where the family is adopting. This is cost prohibitive for so many families who just want to help a child in need. Many of these parents are already raising children but want to add to their family through adoption.

We believe that the state should do everything they can to help families who would like to help these children. While adoption is an imperfect solution to the problem of a child without a home or a family, adoption is sometimes the best option to give that child a stable, loving environment. I personally know so many families that have grown their families through adoption. Adoption is a calling for many families but often they need help to make that dream a reality.

¹ California, Colorado, Idaho, Massachusetts, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Oregon, & Utah, Vermont.



In many situations, ensuring a child who is currently in the foster care system is placed in a loving home, releases the government from the obligation to care full time for a child without a home. And it provides them with the best chance to grow into a healthy young adult in a stable home.

Individuals on both sides of the aisle agree that Kansas especially has a foster care problem. Ensuring that there are families that can afford to adopt children out of foster care that are eligible for adoption will help relieve some of this problem. The bottom line is that ensuring that children are placed in loving adoptive homes, is in the best interest of the child and the state. It is life changing for that family and life changing for the child.

Similarly, women who find themselves in unexpected pregnancies deserve more information not less. Pregnancy Resource Centers all across Kansas have been providing that important information for years.

Depending on the center, pregnancy resource centers provide a variety of services. Most provide counseling, pregnancy testing, parenting classes, post abortive counseling, diapers, clothes. Many help women find housing and jobs. Some provide medical services like ultrasounds, medical exams, STD testing and treatment, and connect women to other community resources.

I have talked to so many women who have told me that if they had known that pregnancy resource centers existed, they would have made a different choice. Sometimes just knowing that there are other options or someone who will support you empowers a woman. These centers are not political. They simply want to help women, whatever that looks like.

In a state that has seen a drop in population, these tax credits will encourage Kansans to continue to support these important organizations serving Kansas women & support families as they seek to raise children in our state.

I, respectfully, ask you to support S.B. 498.

Sincerely,

Brittany Jones