

Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation

Hearing Date: January 25, 2024

Kathleen Marker, CEO

YWCA Northeast Kansas

Written-only proponent testimony for SB 264

Chairperson Tyson, Vice-Chairperson Peck, and members of the Committee:

My name is Kathleen Marker, and I am the CEO of YWCA Northeast Kansas. I'm submitting this testimony to urge your support for SB 264, increasing the income tax credit for child and dependent care expenses. High-quality, affordable childcare is essential for hardworking Kansas families, and for the economic future of our state.

At YWCA Northeast Kansas, we provide childcare for hundreds of families in the Topeka community. The YWCA Early Learning Center is a full-time facility for toddlers and preschoolers located just a couple of blocks from the statehouse, serving families in central Topeka, and our Kids Quest program provides before- and after-care in five Topeka public elementary schools. In the last year, more than 1/3 of our Early Learning Center families used DCF subsidies to afford care. This is a challenge that families right here in our community are facing.

Therefore, we strongly support efforts, like SB 264, that acknowledge and support Kansans working to support their families. Increasing the income tax credit gives direct relief to Kansas families and caregivers, as well as essential stability for providers.

According to the 2022 report [The Status of Women in Kansas](#),¹ full-time care exceeds the cost of public college tuition. The same report identified availability as another significant obstacle faced by families in need of childcare. In all but one county in Kansas, there are not enough childcare slots for even half of the children aged 0-5.

I'm glad to see our state lawmakers considering this and other measures that increase availability and affordability of quality childcare in Kansas. Passing SB 264 is an important step toward shoring up our families, our economy, and our future.

If you have any questions about our experience as providers, or YWCA's mission to empower women and families through affordable childcare, I can be reached at kathleenm@ywcaneks.org and (785) 233-1750. Thank you.

¹ Center for Science, Technology & Economic Policy (CSTEP), Institute for Policy & Social Research, The University of Kansas (2021). *The Status of Women in Kansas: A Summary Report to United WE*. Retrieved from <https://ipsr.ku.edu/publicat/StatusofWomeninKansas2021.pdf>.