



**KANSAS ASSOCIATION  
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

Serving Educational Leaders, Inspiring Student Success

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Testimony before the  
**House Committee on Taxation**

on

**HB 2237 - Concerning taxation**

by

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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear today as a proponent on **HB 2237** on behalf of the Kansas Association of School Boards. We support additional revenue for education and other state programs, which HB 2237 would address. KASB's position on revenue, adopted by the KASB Delegate Assembly in December, reads:

“The state should strive to achieve from the major revenue sources, sales, income and property taxes, a balanced and equitable mix of revenues that are suitable to support public services, including funding for quality education. Taxes should be broadly based to ensure all Kansans share fairly in the cost of public services.”

We believe that there are several reasons that a comprehensive approach to tax reform is the best path forward for Kansas. We appreciate the opportunity to share that with you today.

**Comprehensive tax reform will give Kansas a stable revenue outlook for the future.**

The cuts to income tax rates for both individuals and businesses in 2012 proved to be unsustainable leading to significant cuts in many state organizations including K-12 Education operating funds that have been practically flatlined since 2009.

The volatility and unpredictability of the impact that the tax cuts had on revenue was best illustrated though the struggle of accurately developing consensus revenue estimates that have been off significantly since 2013. With revenue reserves, long since depleted, and a lower than expected revenue stream, painful cuts that have limited and even decreased services have hit every part of the state including education.

Comprehensive reform will also change the path towards zero which has proven to be detrimental to K-12 Education in other states.

**The experience of no income tax states is not positive for education.**

Because Kansas tax policy is based on the eventual goal of eliminating the state income tax, KASB studied the educational results of the seven states without income tax. Not only are none of these states ranked above Kansas – all seven are the bottom half of the nation, ranking as follows: Wyoming 28<sup>th</sup>, Texas 32<sup>nd</sup>, South Dakota, 34<sup>th</sup>, Washington, 35<sup>th</sup>, Florida 43<sup>rd</sup>, Alaska 49<sup>th</sup> and Nevada 50<sup>th</sup>.

As a group, these non-income tax states actually provide more total funding for K-12 education, but if mineral rich and sparsely populated Alaska and Wyoming are removed, the no income tax states provide a about \$2,000 less per pupil than Kansas when adjusted for regional cost differences.

Including Alaska and Wyoming, these states increased funding by 3.4 percent between 2008 and 2014, compared to Kansas' 1.7 percent, but if those states are removed, the increase was just 0.9 percent – far behind the national average of 6.3 percent and nearly 20 percent for the top achieving states.

A review of tax sources in those states makes another point – each of the no income tax states has some other “leg” of the stool of tax collection. They each rely more heavily on property tax at the state level; on “selective” sales taxes like alcohol and motor fuels, or “other” revenue such as mineral production. These states have alternatives to the income tax Kansas does not have.

Finally, the no income tax states are not eliminating a major revenue source, as Kansas is trying to do. Therefore, they do not have to keep diverting revenue growth to what Kansas calls the “ratchet” or “glide path” or “march to zero,” or continue to raise other taxes to make up the loss – because they did not have an income tax in the first place.

A comprehensive revenue package will allow the state to restore needed investments in core services such as education.

**Increased funding supports improved educational attainment by allowing districts to hire more teachers and student support staff; expand services; offer competitive salaries; and provide safer, more efficient facilities and new instructional technology.**

While there are many non-financial factors to improving education, Kansas and other higher achieving sates have done these things for the past several decades:

- School funding has increased more than inflation, which allowed districts to hire more teachers and support staff; provide competitive salaries and benefits; and improve school facilities, equipment and technology.
- This has allowed Kansas to have one of the lowest pupil-teacher ratios in the nation, have more total employees to work with students and families, expanding early childhood and career technical education programs, and keep average school and districts sizes small and rooted in the community.
- Like Kansas, the most successful states have smaller classes, schools, districts and staff positions compared to enrollment than the national average and less successful states.
- School funding has remained stable compared to state personal income, which means funding rises as incomes rise, but not faster. Since 1990, total K-12 expenditures have remained between 4.5 and 5.0 percent of Kansas personal income.

**Kansas needs to raise revenue now to avoid deeper cuts in school funding and other programs and remove the further automatic rate cuts that will hold down school funding indefinitely.**

Unless this is done, Kansas will never able to provide the school funding policy which has been successful in the past.

School leaders understand the extremely difficult budget and tax choices the Legislature faces. But KASB believes the current tax policies of the state are making it impossible to deliver the services Kansas needs and wants, because these the costs of these services increase as public demands change.

While the Kansas Association of School Boards was not a partner in the Rise Up Coalition plan, we believe there is a need for additional revenue and this plan takes the broadest steps in that direction.

Just as we said in support of HB 2023 and HB 2178, a comprehensive and balanced approach to taxation is the best step towards finding a complete solution to the budget issues facing Kansas. We would encourage this committee to strongly support a comprehensive tax reform policy that will adequately and equitably restore necessary revenue to the State of Kansas for investment in core services like Education.

Thank you for your consideration.

Table 1: State income correlation with educational attainment, poverty and tax burden.

	2014 Median Household Income		2015 Per Capital Income		2014 25-year-olds and older						2014 Income Below Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months		State-Local Tax Burden As Percent of State Income	
	Dollars	Rank	Dollars	Rank	Some College or Higher		Bachelors or higher		Graduate degree or higher		Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank
					Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank	Percent	Rank				
Alabama	\$ 42,278	48	\$38,030	47	53.3%	41	23.0	44	8.5	41	19.3	46	8.7	39
Alaska	\$ 67,629	5	\$56,147	5	64.3%	7	29.1	22	10.4	24	11.2	5	6.5	50
Arizona	\$ 49,254	37	\$39,156	42	61.7%	19	27.4	31	10.1	28	18.2	40	8.8	36
Arkansas	\$ 44,922	44	\$38,252	46	49.9%	47	21.4	48	7.3	48	18.9	44	10.1	17
California	\$ 60,487	14	\$53,741	10	61.0%	21	31.7	13	11.8	14	16.4	33	11	6
Colorado	\$ 60,940	11	\$50,899	13	68.9%	1	38.0	3	13.9	8	12.0	12	8.9	35
Connecticut	\$ 70,161	4	\$68,704	1	62.5%	16	37.9	4	16.7	3	10.8	3	12.6	2
Delaware	\$ 57,522	20	\$47,633	22	57.2%	33	30.3	18	12.4	11	12.5	16	10.2	16
Florida	\$ 46,140	42	\$44,429	28	57.4%	32	27.4	33	9.9	30	16.5	34	8.9	34
Georgia	\$ 49,555	36	\$40,306	40	57.0%	35	29.0	23	10.9	21	18.3	41	9.1	32
Hawaii	\$ 71,223	3	\$48,288	20	63.2%	12	31.6	14	10.7	22	11.4	6	10.2	14
Idaho	\$ 53,438	29	\$38,392	44	62.0%	17	25.2	41	8.2	43	14.8	25	9.3	26
Illinois	\$ 54,916	25	\$50,295	15	61.1%	20	33.0	12	12.8	10	14.4	24	11	5
Indiana	\$ 48,060	38	\$41,940	36	53.2%	42	24.8	42	9.0	39	15.2	26	9.5	22
Iowa	\$ 57,810	19	\$45,902	26	59.3%	25	27.9	29	9.4	37	12.2	13	9.2	31
<b>Kansas</b>	<b>\$ 53,444</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>\$47,161</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>63.2%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>23</b>
Kentucky	\$ 42,786	46	\$38,588	43	50.6%	46	22.7	47	9.4	36	19.1	45	9.5	24
Louisiana	\$ 42,406	47	\$42,947	31	49.4%	48	22.9	46	7.8	45	19.8	47	7.6	45
Maine	\$ 51,710	32	\$42,799	33	58.4%	30	29.7	21	10.2	26	14.1	21	10.2	13
Maryland	\$ 76,165	1	\$55,972	7	63.8%	9	38.2	2	17.3	2	10.1	2	10.9	7
Massachusetts	\$ 63,151	10	\$62,603	2	64.4%	6	41.4	1	18.0	1	11.6	9	10.3	12
Michigan	\$ 52,005	31	\$42,812	32	59.7%	23	27.4	32	11.0	20	16.2	32	9.4	25
Minnesota	\$ 67,244	6	\$50,871	14	66.3%	4	34.0	10	11.6	15	11.5	7	10.8	8
Mississippi	\$ 35,521	50	\$34,771	50	52.0%	45	20.9	49	8.0	44	21.5	49	8.6	41
Missouri	\$ 56,630	22	\$42,300	34	57.1%	34	27.5	30	10.5	23	15.5	29	9.3	29
Montana	\$ 51,102	33	\$41,809	38	62.7%	15	28.1	27	9.6	34	15.4	28	8.7	38
Nebraska	\$ 56,870	21	\$48,544	19	63.1%	14	30.2	19	9.5	35	12.4	15	9.2	30
Nevada	\$ 49,875	34	\$41,889	37	56.9%	36	22.9	45	7.8	46	15.2	26	8.1	43
New Hampshire	\$ 73,397	2	\$55,905	9	63.4%	11	35.3	8	13.2	9	9.2	1	7.9	44
New Jersey	\$ 65,243	8	\$59,949	3	60.0%	22	37.2	5	14.2	7	11.1	4	12.2	3
New Mexico	\$ 46,686	41	\$37,938	48	57.7%	31	26.6	34	11.2	19	21.3	48	8.7	37
New York	\$ 54,310	26	\$58,670	4	58.9%	28	34.7	9	15.0	5	15.9	31	12.4	1
North Carolina	\$ 46,784	40	\$40,759	39	59.1%	26	28.7	25	10.1	27	17.2	37	9.8	20
North Dakota	\$ 60,730	12	\$55,950	8	64.3%	8	25.7	39	6.7	50	11.5	7	9	33
Ohio	\$ 49,644	35	\$43,566	30	55.0%	40	26.5	35	9.9	29	15.8	30	9.8	19
Oklahoma	\$ 47,199	39	\$45,573	27	55.2%	39	24.1	43	8.5	42	16.6	35	8.6	40
Oregon	\$ 58,875	16	\$43,783	29	65.5%	5	30.6	17	11.5	16	16.6	35	1.3	10
Pennsylvania	\$ 55,173	24	\$49,745	17	52.8%	43	28.8	24	11.3	18	13.6	19	10.2	15
Rhode Island	\$ 58,633	17	\$50,018	16	58.9%	28	30.2	20	12.2	12	14.3	23	10.8	9
South Carolina	\$ 44,929	43	\$38,302	45	55.7%	38	26.2	37	9.7	32	18.0	39	8.4	42
South Dakota	\$ 53,053	30	\$47,881	21	59.6%	24	26.5	36	6.7	49	14.2	22	7.1	49
Tennessee	\$ 43,716	45	\$42,094	35	52.5%	44	25.4	40	9.1	38	18.3	41	7.3	47
Texas	\$ 53,875	27	\$46,947	24	56.8%	37	27.9	28	9.7	33	17.2	37	7.6	46
Utah	\$ 63,383	9	\$39,308	41	68.2%	2	31.2	16	10.4	25	11.7	10	9.6	21
Vermont	\$ 60,708	13	\$48,587	18	61.8%	18	36.2	7	14.2	6	12.2	13	10.3	11
Virginia	\$ 66,155	7	\$52,052	11	63.6%	10	36.6	6	16.1	4	11.8	11	9.3	27
Washington	\$ 59,068	15	\$51,898	12	67.3%	3	33.2	11	12.0	13	13.2	17	9.3	28
West Virginia	\$ 39,552	49	\$36,758	49	44.2%	49	19.3	50	7.6	47	18.3	41	9.8	18
Wisconsin	\$ 58,080	18	\$45,914	25	59.0%	27	28.5	26	9.7	31	13.2	17	11	4
Wyoming	\$ 55,690	23	\$56,081	6	62.9%	15	25.9	38	9.0	40	11.2	5	7.1	48
Correlation with Household Income					0.75913		0.806		0.657		-0.89		0.2074	
Correlation with Per Capita Income					0.53036		0.755		0.676		-0.74		0.3175	



