

March 22, 2018

Amanda Gress, Director of Government Relations
Kansas Action for Children
Written-Only Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 376
Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

Chair Tyson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to support Senate Bill 376, which will help protect Kansas children from a lifetime of tobacco use. Kansas Action for Children's vision is to make Kansas the best state to raise a child and to be a child, and our organization shapes health, education, and economic policies that benefit Kansas children and their families. **We support an increase in the Kansas tobacco tax because it will improve the health of Kansas children and their parents.**

Tobacco usage risks Kansas kids' health. 10% of Kansas high school students smoke, and 1,500 Kansas children become new daily smokers each year. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids estimates that 61,000 children who are currently under age 18 and alive in Kansas will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.¹ Additionally, 10% of pregnant Kansas mothers smoke during their pregnancies, which increases low birthweights, preterm births, and birth defects.²

Raising the cigarette tax by \$1.50 per pack would improve the health of Kansas children. Passing Senate Bill 376 would cause an estimated 16.4% decrease in youth smoking and prevent 13,900 children from becoming adult smokers. Kansas would have 3,400 fewer smoking-affected pregnancies and births during a five-year period. In addition, this measure would prompt a projected 18,900 adults to quit smoking – which would help protect the children in their lives from the serious health consequences of second-hand smoke exposure.³ Senate Bill 376 would be a major health victory for Kansas children.

Tobacco cessation is a smart investment for Kansas. One component of Kansas' overall strategy to reduce childhood tobacco usage is the

¹ "The Toll of Tobacco in Kansas,": Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/kansas>

² "Cigarette Smoking During Pregnancy: United States, 2016," National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db305.pdf>

³ See <http://acscan.org/tobaccotaxexplanations>

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Tobacco Use Prevention Program, which supports community efforts to keep young people from using tobacco, help tobacco users quit, and reduce nonsmokers' exposure to tobacco. Every \$1 spent on QuitLine and tobacco cessation media leads to \$9 in savings.⁴

Thank you for the opportunity to support Senate Bill 376, which will reduce tobacco use and improve health outcomes for Kansas children. Please do not hesitate to contact me (amanda@kac.org) if Kansas Action for Children can answer any questions or provide any assistance.

⁴ "Children's Initiatives Fund Annual Investment Impact Report: 2016," Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, <http://kschildrenscabinet.org/annual-investment-impact-report/>