

March 15, 2018

Amanda Gress, Director of Government Relations
Kansas Action for Children
Testimony in Support of House Bill 2231
House Taxation Committee

Chair Johnson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to support House Bill 2231, 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 House Bill 2231 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 House Bill 2231 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 House Bill 2331, 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/>