



TO: Kansas House Committee on Taxation
Rep. Adam Smith, Chair
Rep. Brian Bergkamp, Vice Chair
Rep. Tom Sawyer, Ranking Minority Member
Distinguished Representative Members

FROM: Dawn McWilliams, BGCT CEO

DATE: March 18, 2024

RE: Testimony in Support of HB2773

Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee,

I am writing today to offer testimony in support of the sales tax exemption request for the construction of a workforce readiness, career, and leadership development center for middle and high school students in Topeka and Shawnee County, under the auspices of Boys & Girls Clubs Topeka (BGCT). As a longstanding member of the Topeka community and an advocate for youth development, I firmly believe that such a center would be a transformative asset for our young people and the broader community.

BGCT has been a pillar of the Topeka community since 1955, earning a reputation for excellence in providing comprehensive services that address the evolving needs of our youth. What started as a single Club site for boys has expanded into a network of 14 Club sites, serving youth aged 5 to 18 in every school district with out-of-school time services. These services are not just about providing a safe and affordable environment; they are about empowering our youth to excel academically, develop essential life skills, and become leaders and productive members of society.

One of BGCT's key strengths lies in its ability to innovate and tailor programs that inspire youth to reach their full potential. From academic support to career exploration and leadership development, BGCT programs are designed to equip young people with the tools and mindset needed to succeed in school, in the workforce, and as engaged citizens. This holistic approach has yielded countless success stories of youth who have gone on to lead healthy, successful lives thanks to the guidance and support they received at BGCT.

Moreover, BGCT's commitment to transparency and accountability is exemplary. As a nonprofit organization, BGCT maintains good standing with regulatory bodies such as the Secretary of State/Attorney General Office, undergoes annual audits by independent certified public accountants, files annual Form 990 reports, and receives a certificate of Tax Clearance from the



Kansas Department of Revenue. This level of oversight ensures that donor funds are used efficiently and effectively to benefit the youth we serve.

By investing in a workforce readiness, career, and leadership development center, BGCT can further enhance its impact on the community by providing targeted resources and support to middle and high school students. This center would serve as a hub for mentorship, skills training, career exploration, and leadership development, giving our youth the tools they need to thrive in an increasingly competitive and complex world.

In conclusion, I urge you to strongly consider supporting the construction of a workforce readiness, career, and leadership development center under Boys & Girls Clubs Topeka. The positive impact of such a center will not only be felt by the young people it serves but will also contribute to a stronger, more vibrant community for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration and we greatly appreciate your support in this request