



# United Community Services of Johnson County

## Written-Only Testimony in Support of House Bill 2179

Julie Brewer, Executive Director of United Community Services of Johnson County

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Julie K. Brewer, Executive Director  
United Community Services of Johnson County, Inc.  
9001 W. 110<sup>th</sup> St., Ste 100  
Overland Park, KS 66210

Chair Awerkamp and Members of the Committee on Welfare Reform:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in support of HB 2179**. United Community Services of Johnson County (UCS) is a nonprofit agency that provides data analysis, leads collaborative planning, and mobilizes resources to enhance the availability and delivery of health and human services in Johnson County and the surrounding region. UCS is committed to building a community where all people have the opportunity to achieve their individual potential. We believe in the importance of supporting policies, programs and services that are invested in the success of our community's most vital resource - its people.

Workforce development is a foremost consideration for Kansans. **The cost of childcare stands out as one of the biggest barriers to keeping women in the workforce. The 2021 Status of Women in Kansas report from United WE finds that infant care at daycare centers in Kansas is 1.3 times more expensive than in-state college tuition. Among the more than 145,000 children aged 0-17 in Johnson County, 75% of them have both parents in the labor force.** That means that more than 108,600 children need some form of care when their parents are working.

Proposed HB 2179 would reduce barriers to childcare assistance for families by removing disqualification based on parent noncompliance with child support enforcement. **UCS supports HB 2179 which supports increased workforce engagement by reducing barriers to childcare assistance for low-income families.**

**HB 2179 represents a fiscally responsible measure to support workforce development in Kansas.** The childcare assistance program in Kansas is funded through federal dollars and there will be no ongoing cost to the state of Kansas to expand childcare assistance eligibility in this way; in fact, the only cost to make this change is the cost of reprogramming the eligibility systems.

UCS advocates for the advancement of fiscally responsible policies that support workforce growth and families' ability to reach and maintain economic stability. Implementing **HB 2179** is a modest measure that will provide direct support through childcare assistance to hardworking families. **UCS supports House Bill 2179.**

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### Executive Director

Julie K. Brewer