

To: Senate Committee on Transportation
From: Lexie Clark, Executive Director, The Victory Project
Date: February 6, 2024
Re: Proponent SB400

Chairman Petersen and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the children, families, and fans whose lives are enriched by the work of The Victory Project, I am testifying in support of SB400, providing for the Sporting Kansas City distinctive license plate.

The Victory Project was born from the desire of the heartland's soccer community to come together alongside their favorite club to support children battling cancer, breaking down barriers to the beautiful game and celebrating future leaders.

Since 2018, over 190 children battling cancer or other critical illnesses have been honored at Sporting Kansas City home matches. From meeting the players to hearing the crowd chant their name, this experience was best summed up by match day honoree Abby Fay: "I have never felt that special in my life." The Victory Project works to be a moment of celebration and normalcy in the midst of medical treatment and that endeavor extends past the experience at Children's Mercy Park. It manifests through grants and partnerships with other organizations in our community working with these children and families.

Meaningful partnerships are at the core of The Victory Project's mission. Soccer is known as the beautiful game and Sporting Kansas City's community has elevated their passion for the game through support of The Victory Project's efforts to alleviate barriers for children with financial or physical limitations. The Soccer for All grant is an allocation of over \$100,000 annually to organizations to ensure any child that wishes to play the sport has access to equipment, trained staff and program resources.

The Victory Project recognizes the immense privilege and pride that comes with being affiliated with one of the premier Major League Soccer clubs in North America, and the only major professional sports team in Kansas. This privilege empowers us, alongside our fans, to invest in our community's future leaders through the Emerging Sports Leaders Scholarship. These \$5,000 scholarships are offered to graduating seniors pursuing any avenue of higher education, be that a four-year university, a community college or an accredited trade school. This past year, one of our scholarship recipients came to the Kansas City area from a Tanzanian refugee camp where the sport of soccer helped him endure the hardships of his childhood. We are honored to be part of his transition to collegiate soccer at Park University.

The philanthropic contribution associated with the adoption of a Sporting Kansas City license plate will allow fans to display their team pride, while celebrating and empowering our community's children through The Victory Project.

I thank you for your consideration and urge you to advance SB400 favorably. I will be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.