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**DATE: February 14, 2024**  
**TO: Senate Education Committee**  
**FROM: Jennifer Bruning, Executive Director, KS State Alliance of YMCAs**  
**RE: Written-Only Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 437**

Madam Chair and Honorable Members of the Senate Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 437, which would provide state funding to support the continuation of the Kansas Education Enrichment Program (KEEP).

The Kansas State Alliance of YMCAs is comprised of 10 YMCA associations with branches and programs in more than 25 communities across the state. As the largest child care provider in Kansas, serving over 17,000 kids in early learning and out-of-school time programs and dozens of summer day and overnight camps, the Y appreciates this opportunity to support a measure that would provide a \$1,000 educational award to each Kansas elementary and secondary student for qualified enrichment and educational goods and services.

All of our YMCA child care programs strive to provide high quality, affordable and accessible child care services to families in communities across Kansas with a mission to serve all regardless of the ability to pay. These programs not only meet the needs of early learners and school-age scholars, nurturing a child's development by providing a safe and healthy place to learn foundational skills, but they make a significant impact on the economy in Kansas as well, allowing parents to go to work knowing their kids are in a safe and healthy environment. In addition, these programs also help close academic achievement gaps in students that may be created either from economic circumstances or from the pandemic.

Our Alliance supports the state's efforts to provide more Kansas families, no matter their economic standing, with access to academic and enrichment programs.

We urge the Committee to support Senate Bill 162. Thank you.