

Testimony before the
House Taxation Committee
Supporting Comprehensive Tax Reform

By

Treka J. Henry

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Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee:

My name is Treka Henry. I am a mother of a young son, a wife, and a veteran who just left service almost two years ago. My family and I are proud to reside in Lenexa. I am an advocate for several causes such as veteran organizations and volunteering my free time to help others who need a little extra help.

I thank you for taking the time to listen to what this proud Kansan has to say. I realize you all have a very important job to do so I will be brief in my letter concerning revenue reform for the great Sunflower State. I am writing this letter in support of the HB 2237 “Rise Up, Kansas” Tax Reform Package.

To put it bluntly, Kansas is broke and we are sick of it. We are terrified for our children’s futures in education and social mobility due to the economic downfall of the state they currently live. Although my husband and I are young professionals within our own community, we hear all the stories about how back in the day people sought out Kansas from across the border due to schools. But this is not so anymore and it’s wholly due to the latest state tax gutting by the current leadership. Kansas is not that shining star for education that enticed people at one point to join our state. Among many other things, education needs money. Plain and simple.

We are sick of seeing tax breaks go to the wealthy. I understand that there is even a group of wealthy business owners and attorneys within the state who understand it is time to pay their share and they are asking to repeal the Kansas “LLC loophole” which gives tax cuts to pass through income, because these business owners feel like they are freeloading from the state. This is an important first step, but we need to repeal the ratchet mechanism that would then take whatever revenue was made off reinstating the LLC income and put it towards cutting income tax for the top tax bracket. While both of these things are vital, it is still necessary to reinstate the upper income tax bracket for the richest Kansans. Those very tax cuts could be helping ordinary residents like myself and my family and perhaps *more importantly*, could be helping fund our highways and other types of infrastructure as well as education programs throughout the state.

Not only is the 2012 tax plan not right or even ethical, it’s damaging for our own security. Those tax breaks that are going to the business owners could be helping new initiatives to secure the communities in which we live, funding safe roads, community policing departments, social services for the young, and care for the elderly.

Grateful for your time,

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