



KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Mark Desetti, written testimony
Senate Committee on Taxation
March 22, 2018
Senate Bill 376

Madame Chair, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 376.

Teachers and school employees are advocates for the children we serve. This includes not simply advocating for the curriculum and standards in schools but also for the well-being of our students.

We have long supported child nutrition programs, health care programs such as S-CHIP, and protection programs like Erin's Law, the Jason Flatt Act, and bullying policies.

Our support for SB 376 is no different from those advocacy efforts. Cigarettes and tobacco products are dangers to the well-being and particularly the health of our children. We believe that more must be done to end youth use of such products and exposure to second hand smoke.

To the extent that an increase in taxes on these products will have the effect of reducing use, then this is a benefit to us all and in particular to youth.

We hope that increases like those proposed in this legislation will result in reduced youth smoking and smoking by parents and other care-givers that exposes youth to harmful second-hand smoke or teaches young people that smoking and tobacco use are not harmful. With reduced tobacco use what we will see is improved health benefits for our children, better school attendance, and a reduction in health care costs to children and families.

Passage of this legislation will also raise revenue for the state. The fiscal note indicates a potential increase of \$100 million in FY 2019. These funds can certainly help the legislature address the many issues faced this year in supporting state services for the benefit of all Kansans.

But for us, this is less a revenue issue than it is a public health issue. We support passage of this legislation as part of advocacy for our children, protecting their health and well-being. For this reason we ask that you support SB 376.