

May 2, 2014

Contact:
Shannon Cotsoradis
President and CEO
785-232-0550
Shannon@kac.org

Legislature votes to sweep \$5 million from early childhood programs

TOPEKA—The Kansas Legislature today passed a state budget that takes \$5 million from children’s programs for the Kansas Bioscience Authority.

“Once again, legislators are abandoning their promise to invest in Kansas children,” said April Holman, executive director of the Kansas Coalition for School Readiness. “Last year, the Legislature swept \$9.5 million, and now the Legislature has voted to take \$5 million from early childhood programs to give to the Kansas Bioscience Authority. Kansas made the commitment to invest early, and it’s a commitment worth keeping. We need to maintain funding for children and continue our investment in early childhood programs.”

The majority of early childhood programs in Kansas are funded by the master tobacco settlement received annually by the state. This year, the payment was \$62 million. The governor’s budget recommended \$55 million this year for children’s programs, leaving \$7 million slated for the Kansas Endowment for Youth Fund.

However, yesterday the Budget Conference Committee agreed to “sweep” \$5 million from the KEY Fund. The sweep was proposed and accepted without debate in the final moments of the negotiation. It was then approved by the full House and Senate.

The Legislature has swept more than \$145 million in tobacco settlement payments from the KEY Fund and children’s programs since the payments began in 1999. Meanwhile, funding for most early childhood programs supported by tobacco dollars has been stagnant since 2009, making it difficult for programs to continue to provide the same level of services. In some cases, this means that fewer children are being served; in other cases the same number of children are being served but by fewer providers.

“This sweep of funds earmarked for children is just the latest in a series of moves by lawmakers that are done behind closed doors and without making all the facts available publically,” said Shannon Cotsoradis, president and CEO of Kansas Action for Children. “The lack of transparency makes it extremely difficult for anyone to oppose these measures, and Kansas children end up paying the price.”



720 SW Jackson I Suite 201
Topeka, KS 66603

P: 785-232-0550 | F: 785-232-0699
kac@kac.org | www.kac.org

Shaping policy that puts children first

President & CEO
Shannon Cotsoradis

Board of Directors
Pat Anderson
Matt Badsky
Jeffrey Colvin, MD
Tina DeLaRosa
Sue Evans
Susan Fetsch, PhD, RN
Judy Frick
Ximena Garcia, MD
Susan Garlinghouse
Becky Holmquist
Terrie Huntington
Marta Kennedy
Angie Knackstedt, BSN, RN-BC
Rhonda Lewis, PhD, MPH
Francis Mascarenhas
Sarah Mays
Adrienne Olejnik
Marty Rombold
Jamie Schmaltz