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Amy Goode, CFO and Co-Founder
Food Equality Initiative, Inc.
SB 372 Testimony for Public Health & Welfare Committee Hearing

Chairwoman Pilcher-Cook and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns about the changes proposed in SB 372 regarding eligibility for Kansas public assistance. Food Equality Initiative, Inc. (FEI) is a Kansas based non profit dedicated to improving health and ending hunger in food insecure individuals diagnosed with food allergies and Celiac disease by increasing access to safe and healthy food, education, and advocacy. We oppose the proposed changes.

Food insecurity is defined by the lack of resources to provide enough food to live an active and healthy lifestyle. In 2015, a report released by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimated 22.3% of Kansas experienced low and very low food insecurity.

For many of our pantry clients, applying for SNAP has been a last resort due to job loss, illness and disability. Proposed changes in this bill would increase barriers of access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which has been an effective tool in the fight against poverty and food insecurity.

SNAP not only provides needy families access to adequate nutrition, but also gives an economic boost to our economy. The Beans and Greens Program in the Kansas City Area, which doubles **SNAP dollars for recipients at local farmer's markets has made a 2-million-dollar impact** on the local economy.

The negative consequences of food insecurity in Kansas communities are devastating and impactful for all. Poor learning and escalating health care costs, are among the many long term consequences directly related to food insecurity. For these reasons, we respectfully request that to committee oppose SB 372.