



Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation

February 20, 2023

Dear Chair Tyson and Members of the Committee on Assessment and Taxation,

My name is Jon McCormick, President and CEO of the Retail Grocers Association of Kansas and Missouri. I am writing you today to ask you to not raise food taxes on Kansas families. Do not support SB 248. This bill would be wrong for Kansas.

I represent most of the Independent Kansan Supermarket and Convenience store sales in the State of Kansas. Many legislators in both the Senate and the House know that Kansans need help with the basic need of buying food. That is why you wisely voted in the Senate 39-0 to lower the food sales tax to zero in a few years. Just in time, as the Food prices have soared due to supply chain increases, avian flu, good old COVID, the labor shortages that ensued, and the pressure of being in a recession.

However, now you want to take back what you gave to Kansans. SB 248 is a hidden tax increase to Kansans who buy food in grocery stores, convenience stores and supermarkets. Hidden in the guise of taxing only the "so-called unhealthy food" at the higher rate. Who decides if it is unhealthy? I could cite studies and other attempts at government wanting to become the food police. History says it doesn't work.

Last year, you pledged to Kansans that food taxes are going to zero in 2 ½ years. Why would you want to renege on your promise to Kansas families and institute a regressive tax scheme that SB 248 would put into place and end up taxing the mid to lower income families in Kansas.

Thankfully, last year, you voted 39-0 to help the independent grocers in Kansas gain a level playing field with the other states by 2025. They do not want to go back to having a competitive disadvantage based on tax policy. I certainly do not want to be asked to come to Topeka and discuss food deserts in the aftermath of this bad tax policy.

SB 248 would be confusing to the consumer, unfair to the retail businesses along the state borders. Attempting to achieve the goals of taxing unhealthy foods would be uncertain at best and a failure at worst. Please, DO NOT support SB 248. It is bad for Kansas.

Thank you for your time today and thank you for your dedication to your fellow Kansans.

If you have any questions for me, I stand ready,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jon'.

Jon McCormick, President/CEO, Retail Grocers Association KS & MO