



United Community Services of Johnson County

Written-Only Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 248

Julie Brewer, Executive Director of United Community Services of Johnson County

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Executive Director

Julie K. Brewer

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Julie K. Brewer, Executive Director
United Community Services of Johnson County, Inc.
9001 W. 110th St., Ste 100
Overland Park, KS 66210

Chairman Tyson and Members of the Committee on Assessment and Taxation:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in opposition to Senate Bill 248**. United Community Services of Johnson County (UCS) is a nonprofit agency that provides data analysis, leads collaborative planning, and mobilizes resources to enhance the availability and delivery of health and human services in Johnson County and the surrounding area.

UCS believes in the importance of supporting policies, programs and services that are invested in the success of our community's most vital resource - its people. Many working families across Kansas have become increasingly cost burdened in their housing, healthcare, childcare and other necessities like food, clothing, and school supplies. Rather than supporting residents in this time of government surplus, **Senate Bill 248 walks back the reduction in food sales tax already passed in 2021 by the legislature.**

According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey, in 2021, 36,492 people in Johnson County were living below the poverty line. The 2021 Federal Poverty Level for a family of three was \$21,960, or \$1,830 per month. **Nearly 15%, or 90,341 residents, of Johnson County residents were living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level in 2021.** For a family of three, 200% of the Federal Poverty level was \$43,920, or \$3,360 per month. The purchase of groceries consumes a higher portion of low-income households' disposable income, resulting in lower-income households paying a larger portion of their income in taxes than higher income households.

UCS advocates for the advancement of fiscal and taxation policies that support families' ability to reach and maintain economic stability and further educational attainment and workforce growth. **Implementing Senate Bill 248 would be a broken promise and a direct cost increase for hardworking families; it is fiscally irresponsible at a time when state government is experiencing record tax collections and reserves. UCS opposes Senate Bill 248.**

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2021 1-year data