



February 3, 2025

Submitted via Email

Chairman Francis Averkamp and Members of the House Committee on Welfare Reform
Kansas State House of Representatives
Room 370W, Capitol Building
300 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka KS 66612-1504

Dear Chairman Averkamp and Members of the House Committee on Welfare Reform:

On behalf of the National Confectioners Association (NCA), I wanted to reach out to you regarding proposed legislation (House Bill 2015) in the State that would restrict food items eligible for purchase under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We are opposed to House Bill 2015, as NCA believes that all consumers, including SNAP participants, should have the right to make informed choices when it comes to deciding what to eat or drink.

The National Confectioners Association is the leading trade organization for the \$48 billion U.S. confectionery industry. The NCA represents manufacturers, wholesalers, and suppliers of chocolate, candy, gum, and mints, supporting more than 5,000 jobs in Kansas through direct economic activity and providing over \$307 million in total economic output in the State.

With over 90,000ⁱ SNAP households in Kansas, SNAP participants currently benefit from purchasing flexibility at eligible SNAP retailers in the State. The ability to choose items for everyday meals and special occasions permits participants to vary their consumption based on their individual needs and preferences. Broad based product eligibility also allows participants to easily shop for groceries without confusing limitations on eligible items that could result in products being declined at the register, creating unanticipated charges on the cash portion of the order that participants may be unable to fund out of pocket.

Kansas SNAP participants also currently benefit from a variety of eligible retailers across the State. If retailers are suddenly required to scrutinize individual product eligibility and flag each eligible and non-eligible item at their point-of-sale, this will substantially increase compliance challenges for retailers and may decrease the number of eligible SNAP retailers in the State. Any decrease in the number of eligible SNAP retailers could exacerbate existing food access challenges in Kansas for SNAP participants. According to the Kansas Health Foundation, 30 percent of Kansas counties are considered to be food deserts, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The interoperability of the SNAP program across states also is an integral component of the federal program, and creating product eligibility variances across states could limit the ability of Kansas SNAP participants to purchase products while traveling out-of-state. This could pose a particular challenge to Kansas, as state residents border the four states of Nebraska, Missouri, Oklahoma and Colorado.

Having a balanced approach to food and nutrition is important for both SNAP and non-SNAP households, but it is also important to recognize the value of confectionary items in life's celebrations. Whether food is purchased by a SNAP or a non-SNAP household, purchasing patterns are substantially equivalent, with only 2.1% of SNAP purchases and 2.23% of non-SNAP purchases attributed to candyⁱⁱ. Chocolate and candy have special roles during celebrations and holidays and the ability to purchase the occasional treat can help support a happy, balanced lifestyle.

Proposed SNAP benefit limitations would negatively impact SNAP participants, increase compliance challenges at retail, impair program interoperability across states and limit special occasion purchases. It is for these reasons that NCA respectfully requests your opposition to House Bill 2015 and welcomes the chance to further discuss the legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Gardner

Jennifer Gardner
Director of State Government Affairs

ⁱ *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Number of Households Participating*. USDA Food and Nutrition Service (October 2024). Available at <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-households-1.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ Garasky S, et al. *Foods Typically Purchased by Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households*. USDA Food and Nutrition Service (November 2016). Available at <https://fnsprod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/ops/SNAPFoodsTypicallyPurchased.pdf>.