



**Written Opponent Testimony Re: SB 79
House Committee on Welfare Reform
Presented by Derek Hein
on behalf of
Kansas Beverage Association
March 6, 2025**

Chairman Awerkamp and Members of the House Committee on Welfare Reform

My name is Derek Hein, and I serve as Executive Director for the Kansas Beverage Association (KBA). The KBA is the state trade association for non-alcoholic beverage bottling companies operating in Kansas. Products manufactured and distributed by members of the KBA include soft drinks, bottled waters, isotonic drinks, juice, juice drinks, sports drinks, dairy-based beverages, teas, and other beverages. We are proud to be a part of the fabric of our great state.

SB 79 would direct the Secretary for Children and Families to request a waiver from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that would allow the state to prohibit the purchase of candy and soft drinks with food assistance benefits.

The Kansas Beverage Association strongly opposes SB 79.

Keep big government out of our grocery carts. America's beverage companies are driving real changes in grocery aisles that lead to better outcomes for all Americans. Because of their transformative innovation, nearly 60 percent of beverages sold today contain zero sugar. Providing more choices with less sugar and smaller portion sizes along with clear information is the better way to support families in their efforts to achieve balance.

Restricting SNAP purchases puts the government in charge of decisions that have always been left to families – and it will not produce cost savings. Families who need financial help buying groceries make the same decisions we all do and should have the same dignity of choice.

Restrictions complicate SNAP and grow bureaucracy. Allowing the government to designate grocery items as “good” and “bad” just for people on SNAP would create a food code more complicated than the tax code. This would be a tremendous regulatory burden on



local grocers. The beverage aisle has more than 7,500 Stock Keeping Units (SKUs) that would have to be analyzed and categorized to determine what's in and what's out. Restrictions will not save money but would put us on a slippery slope of government bureaucrats deciding annually which foods and beverages some Americans are allowed to purchase for their families.

Information and choices lead to long-lasting behavior changes. Bans and restrictions do not. These restrictions will not save the SNAP program money.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote down SB 79.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.