



# Testimony

KCCA represents the elected Commissioners in all 105 counties.  
Republicans. Democrats. Rural. Urban.  
360+ locally elected officials. All working to serve their communities.

**Senate Bill 254**  
**Local Public Benefits for Undocumented Residents**  
**Opposition**  
**Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee**  
**February 27, 2025**

The Kansas County Commissioners Association opposes Senate Bill 254 because it imposes what will be impossible restrictions for cities and counties to enforce.

SB 254 prohibits individuals who are unlawfully in the United States from receiving any state or local public benefits. Most of this is already federal law. Cities and counties are already following these laws related to the use of public funds for programs. However, this bill expands the scope of reporting responsibilities and verification for programs which are part of everyday life in most communities.

This testimony is not a comment or opinion on current immigration and deportation policies. It is to illustrate how difficult enforcing the provisions of SB 254 could be.

*Under the bill, "State or local public benefit" means— (A) any grant, contract, loan, professional license, or commercial license provided by an agency of a State or local government or by appropriated funds of a State or local government; and (B) any retirement, welfare, health, disability, public or assisted housing, postsecondary education, food assistance, unemployment benefit, or any other similar benefit for which payments or assistance are provided to an individual, household, or family eligibility unit by an agency of a State or local government or by appropriated funds of a State or local government.*

In recent weeks many local governments, often working with non-profit groups, opened cold weather shelters to protect people from sub-freezing temperatures. Many people who show-up at the door will not have identification. How are the people operating the shelter supposed to verify citizenship? And if they turn someone away because they suspect the person may be undocumented, but it turns out they are a resident living here legally, and they freeze to death, is the local government liable?

If a family wants to reserve a picnic shelter at the county lake, are parks and rec staff expected to ask everyone to show their papers? What about at the community swimming pool?

Many public health departments provide frontline medical care for citizens when it comes to prevention and nutrition. In one urban county, 30,000 individuals make 80,000 visits a year for health services. Having to verify citizenship will be an administrative nightmare. Imagine turning away a pregnant mother who comes to a pre-natal clinic for baby vitamins because her citizenship can't be readily confirmed. How many pregnant women will be denied health care because they can't readily prove citizenship?

Communities which own municipal utilities provide electric and water service to thousands of residents. SB 254 states: *“No state, county or local agency shall provide any public benefit to any alien without first verifying that the alien is lawfully present in the United States and a qualified alien.”* That would be a very burdensome requirement for a small municipal utility to meet. And if a resident can’t adequately provide documentation are then denied electric and water service?

There are many more examples where SB 254 imposes burdensome and unworkable requirements on local governments, especially in smaller counties with large immigrant populations.

The Legislature needs to consider the practical impact of SB 254 before making it a law.

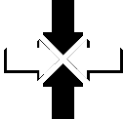
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