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Testimony Opposing House Bill 2378 and Senate Bill 254  
2/13/2025

Submitted by El Centro, Inc.

To the Members of the Committee on Federal and State Affairs,

For decades, we have worked to ensure that vulnerable individuals and families have access to essential public benefits that promote economic stability, and overall well-being. House Bill 2378 and Senate Bill 254 threatens to dismantle this progress, placing thousands of residents at risk by imposing severe restrictions on public benefits, including grants, contracts, professional and commercial licenses, retirement benefits, housing assistance, food assistance, by playing on fear and bigoted feeling towards immigrants who are already unable to receive public benefits in the state of Kansas. We strongly oppose HB 2378 and SB 254 and urge lawmakers to reject these harmful provisions:

**Endangering Public Health and Well-Being** – Cutting access to health benefits, including disability assistance and postsecondary education support, will increase poverty, worsen health outcomes, and place more strain on emergency services.

**Destabilizing Families and Communities** – These bills put critical benefits like food assistance, public housing, and unemployment support in jeopardy, making it harder for families to stay housed, afford necessities, and recover from financial setbacks.

**Shifting Costs to Local Governments and Emergency Services** – By stripping away essential safety nets, these bills will not reduce public spending but will instead shift costs to hospitals, shelters, law enforcement, and other local services that must respond to increased crises in our communities.

**Discouraging Families from Seeking Assistance** – These bills create a climate of fear among parents who may hesitate to apply for benefits their children qualify for due to concerns about eligibility restrictions or punitive repercussions. This could lead to unenrollment in essential programs, leaving children without access to food, healthcare, and housing support, further exacerbating cycles of poverty.

We urge lawmakers to oppose this bill and prioritize policies that support, rather than punish, individuals striving to build a stable and productive future.

  
Erica Andrade, President & CEO  
El Centro, Inc.

