



March 4th/5th

Ashley Jones-Wisner
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HB 2381 Testimony for Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Hearing
SB 256 Testimony for Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Chairman Hutton and members of the Committee:
Chairwoman Pilcher-Cook and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns about the changes in eligibility for social welfare programs proposed in HB 2381/SB 256. KC Healthy Kids is a Kansas City area non profit focused on reducing childhood obesity. Our policy work and programs address school nutrition, community engagement and youth advocacy. We oppose the proposed changes.

Nearly half of all Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Assistance (SNAP) participants are children, and 82% of all SNAP benefits go to vulnerable houses that include a child, elderly or disabled person. One in seven Kansas households are food insecure, which means they do not have reliable access to food.

Changes proposed in these bills would negatively impact low-income children and families. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and SNAP are two important tools designed to help struggling families as they work to escape poverty. **By design, TANF is already a temporary program and SNAP is only available for three months every three years for abled-body adults.**

The Department of Children and Families has already implemented many of the policies outlined in this bill through administrative policy change, resulting in a 28% decrease in children receiving TANF assistance despite growing childhood poverty.

The bill would also prohibit Kansas from using categorical eligibility, which is an efficient tool that helps ascertain if a family is eligible for multiple programs. By prohibiting the use of this tool, the State will be subject to increased administrative burdens and costs because of duplicative efforts.

The bill also bans SNAP benefits for life for individuals who are convicted of a drug felony. By doing this, low-income children would be put in danger of being denied benefits for past actions of their parents/guardians, and, as a consequence, punish individuals working to productively and successfully reenter society. Because hunger can serve a trigger for relapse, this provision would endanger children and families.

We respectfully request that the committee oppose HB 2381 and SB 256.