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President & CEO
Harvesters—The Community Food Network
HB 2600, Health and Human Services Committee

Chairman Hawkins and members of the Committee:

This testimony is submitted on behalf of Harvesters—The Community Food Network, the regional food bank serving northeast Kansas. Our nonprofit network includes 302 charitable organizations providing food assistance to hungry and food insecure children, seniors and adults in 16 Kansas counties.

Harvesters opposes HB 2600. At a time when 14.5% of Kansans are food insecure and an alarming 22.3% of Kansas children are food insecure, we cannot further erode the safety net supports designed to help lift them out of poverty.

The policies in HB 2600 limit access to safety net supports for which our most vulnerable citizens are eligible. Our goal should be to ensure that the safety net reaches families in need so they have adequate food and shelter and hope for the future.

As the community's charitable response to hunger, our Feeding America network of pantries, kitchens and shelters in Kansas is already providing emergency food assistance to as many as 136,700 different Kansans each month. With 61% of our member agencies reporting an increase in the number of clients coming to them for food assistance, the charitable sector is stretched thin. We simply cannot meet the needs of all of the families and children who are denied benefits and are still in great need.

In addition to opposing these additional barriers to accessing the safety net, we encourage the committee to review existing policies that are making it more difficult for the most vulnerable among us to meet their basic needs.

We ask for your careful consideration and vote in opposition to this bill.

Harvesters' mission is to feed hungry people today and work to end hunger tomorrow.



HOUSE HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

DATE:

ATTACHMENT