

MINUTES OF THE SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mary Pilcher-Cook at 1:32pm on Monday, February 01, 2016, 118-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:
Senator David Haley – Excused

Committee staff present:
Randi Walters, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant
Scott Abbott, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Iraida Orr, Legislative Research Department
Whitney Howard, Legislative Research Department
Kyle Hamilton, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:
Sandra Kimmons, Director of Economic and Employment Services, Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)
Jennie Tesch, Independent Contractor with the State of Kansas/DCF
Lucy Ross, Private Citizen
Amanda Gress, Director of Government Relations, Kansas Action for Children (KAC)
Rebekah Gaston, Director, Childhood Hunger Initiative, Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, Inc.

Others in attendance:
[See Attached List](#)

Possible bill introductions

Matt Hickam, Kansas Dental Project, introduced a bill concerning the Kansas Dental Board regarding the licensure of dental therapists. With no objection, the bill was introduced.

Chairperson Pilcher-Cook requested approval of the minutes dated January 13 and January 19, 2016. With no objection, the minutes were approved.

Hearing on: SB372 — Amendments to Kansas public assistance eligibility, limitations and verification.

Chairperson Pilcher-Cook opened the hearing on **SB372**. Scott Abbott, staff revisor, presented a briefing on the bill.

Sandra Kimmons, DCF, representing Jaime Rogers, Deputy Secretary of Family Services, DCF, testified in support of **SB372**. Ms. Kimmons provided some history of the Kansas Hope, Opportunity and Prosperity for Everyone (HOPE) Act that was signed into law in April of 2015. Ms. Kimmons indicated that **SB372** is a continuation of those goals for work. Ms. Kimmons stated that this new Act

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would include work requirements for all non-exempt food assistance recipients including work registration, being available for voluntary training programs in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), accepting a suitable offer of employment, and not voluntarily quitting a job of at least 30 hours per week. Ms. Kimmons provided a brief description of the four provisions for Program Integrity: Lottery Winnings, Replacement Cards, Assistance Applicant Identity Verification, and Fraud Investigation Cooperation. Ms. Kimmons also described some technical corrections that are included in **SB372**. Ms. Kimmons concluded by stating that DCF supports this bill as it furthers their efforts to help individuals move from poverty to prosperity through self-reliance. ([Attachment 1](#))

Jennie Tesch, Independent Contractor, testified in support of **SB372**. Ms. Tesch shared the experience of one of her ex-clients, who is the next conferee, indicating how well the programs can work when someone takes full advantage of all that is offered by the state. Ms. Tesch stated that their clients face a number of very complex and debilitating barriers. Ms. Tesch concluded by stating that she has seen many success stories and it is only with the combination of community resources, community agencies, the career navigators, programs like hers, and the client that these successes are possible. ([Attachment 2](#))

Lucy Ross testified in support of **SB372**. Ms. Ross shared a brief history of her experience and how the programs offered by DCF have helped her. Ms. Ross described how Jennie Tesch's work program helped her with her resume, prepared her for interviews, and helped her with her attire. Ms. Ross spoke about the help her caseworker gave her in acquiring a car after she got a job so she could get her kids to school and then get to work on time. ([Attachment 3](#))

Amanda Gress, KAC, testified in opposition to **SB372**. Ms. Gress indicated that **SB372** creates additional barriers to accessing the state safety net making it more difficult for children and families to participate in the safety net. Ms. Gress stated that verifying the identity of all adults in the household penalizes multiple-adult families, creates additional administrative costs, and delays assistance for children and families who cannot meet their basic needs. Ms. Gress indicated that Kansas should instead ensure that the state safety net reaches families that are in need. Ms. Gress stated that **SB372** gives Kansas policymakers the opportunity to revisit limitations on accessing safety net programs. Ms. Gress concluded her testimony by providing some specific ways that the safety net can be strengthened. ([Attachment 4](#))

Rebekah Gaston, Kansas Appleseed, testified in opposition to **SB372**. Ms. Gaston stated that the DCF policies proposed in **SB372**, when combined with the policies put in place by last year's HOPE Act and other agency-level policies at DCF come together to create significant hurdles that are difficult for recipients and potential recipients to overcome. Ms. Gaston stated that this bill places unduly harsh penalties on recipients who don't comply quickly enough with food assistance work requirements, cutting off crucial nutritional benefits for months at a time for minor infractions. Ms. Gaston stated that **SB372** as written will not help Kansans move out of poverty. ([Attachment 5](#))

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

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Written testimony in support of **SB372** was submitted by:

Tarren Bragdon, Chief Executive Officer, and Josh Archambault, Senior Fellow, FGA Action [\(Attachment 6\)](#)

Kelly Mobray, Director of Adult Education, Salina Adult Education Center, USD 305, Salina Public Schools [\(Attachment 7\)](#)

Written testimony in opposition of **SB372** was submitted by:

Ashley Jones-Wisner, State Policy Director, KC Healthy Kids [\(Attachment 8\)](#)

Karen Wulfkuhle, Executive Director, United Community Services of Johnson County (UCS) [\(Attachment 9\)](#)

Erin Besson, Kansas Association of Community Action Programs (KACAP) [\(Attachment 10\)](#)

Judith G. Storandt, JD, PhD, Kids Need to Eat, Inc., President/LunchBox Administrator [\(Attachment 11\)](#)

Amy Goode, CFO and Co-Founder, Food Equality Initiative, Inc. [\(Attachment 12\)](#)

Written neutral testimony for **SB372** was submitted by:

Kansas Lottery [\(Attachment 13\)](#)

Chairperson Pilcher-Cook asked Stephen Durrell, Lottery Assistant Attorney General, to give a briefing of their testimony specifically regarding anonymity. After questions from the Committee were answered, Chairperson Pilcher-Cook closed the hearing on **SB372**.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:18 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 2, 2016.