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March 5, 2015

Senator Mary Pilcher-Cook
Chair
Committee on Public Health & Welfare
Kansas Senate
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: Suggested Changes to SB 256

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to suggest changes to SB 256.

We understand the desire to protect the integrity of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). However, we are concerned that the language imposing a lifetime SNAP eligibility ban on anyone convicted of a drug related felony does not take into consideration the possibility of rehabilitation. It can be very difficult for individuals with felony drug convictions to find employment. A blanket lifetime ban precludes the possibility of supporting a rehabilitated individual who could be helped by food assistance at a time of vulnerability.

Perhaps this language could be reworked to target drug felons involved in trading SNAP benefits for drugs. Another possibility would be to offer those with felony drug convictions the opportunity to have their eligibility restored if they complete some sort of substance abuse program.

With respect to this and all other parts of the bill, we would urge the Legislature and the Department of Children and Families to be on guard against any unintended impact on the children of the adults in question.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michael Schuttloffel
Executive Director

MOST REVEREND JOHN B. BRUNGARDT, D.D.
DIOCESE OF DODGE CITY

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