



February 6, 2017

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SB 95 Testimony for Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Chairwoman Schmidt and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 95. KC Healthy Kids is a Kansas City area non profit focused on reducing childhood obesity by shaping policies to improve access to healthy food. We believe safety net programs like SNAP and TANF are critical, particularly for the health of Kansas children. The changes in Senate Bill 95 will have a significant economic impact on the most vulnerable of Kansans, encourage thriving local economies and healthy Kansas kids.

Modify TANF work requirement for new mothers

A change made last year to the HOPE Act requires new mothers wanting to access TANF to return to work two months after giving birth. Prior to the change, new moms were given one year. We know because of the lack of availability, accessibility and cost of infant care, this is an extremely prohibitive change and one that is not feasible for most new mothers. In Kansas, annual cost of infant care ranges from \$6,800 (family child care/in home) to \$14,500 (centers). These costs often decrease around one year depending on daycare rules. Waiting lists are long for infant care, especially in rural parts of the state where child care facilities in general are scarce. Reinstating the work requirement to one year will allow new mothers more time to search for sustainable employment and find quality childcare at a lower cost since they will not have to pay the newborn/infant rate.

Acceptance of voice signature

Currently, community partners such as Harvesters assist individuals over the phone using the online application portal. Community partners who are assisting individuals in remote rural areas or elderly or homebound individuals who are not able to physically visit a community partner site must fill out a paper application by hand. The community partner must then mail it to the applicant to sign and attach the necessary documentation. This process is needlessly time consuming. The bill would provide the ability to submit telephonic signatures, which would significantly improve the Food Assistance application process for applicants and for the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Allow the DCF Secretary to request a waiver in times of distress

It is important to return to the DCF Secretary the authority to request the federal waiver for work requirements option when there is high unemployment or insufficient jobs (such as the 2008 recession).

For these reasons, we respectfully request the committee support Senate Bill 95, as doing so will have a significant economic impact on the most vulnerable of Kansans.

Senate Public Health and Welfare

Date 2.7.17

Attachment 11