



February 3, 2017

Kim Brabits  
Vice President of Program Operations  
Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas

Testimony in favor of SB 95  
Senate Public Health and Welfare

Dear Chairwoman Schmidt and members of the Committee:

Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas is a non-profit, faith-based, human services organization that offers Family Stabilization & Strengthening programs in the 21-counties of Northeast Kansas. Our agency serves more than 77,000 people of all faiths annually. Through our pantries alone, we provide food assistance over 250,000 times to Kansans in need. I am honored to submit written testimony representing not only our organization and the people that we serve, but to also speak on behalf of all the non-profit entities that work to alleviate poverty in our State.

I am writing in support of SB 95. This bill ensures a strong and secure safety net and opportunities for individuals and families as they work to mitigate crisis in order to move toward self-sufficiency. As an agency, our goal is to offer help and hope to lift low-income Kansas families out of situational and generational poverty. We believe strongly in affording the opportunities for Kansas moms and dads to complete academic or job training programs. This includes not only financial assistance, but the ability to access nutrition support programming. We also strongly believe in the need to protect the health of both mom and baby by giving mothers the chance to spend much needed time with their child during the first year of life.

Working with vulnerable populations to obtain employment that provides a living wage frequently requires additional training or education. Exempting parents from work requirements allows time to take advantage of educational programs, giving each family the ability to earn a sufficient wage for their family. Exemption from the 24-month lifetime limit for childcare further enhances this opportunity by allowing for education programs that exceed 24 months. We firmly believe that this is in direct correlation to obtaining higher paying jobs, thus decreasing the need to rely on state funded programs.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families is a key resource for new mothers as they work to create/start their family. In addition, Kansas lacks adequate child care availability for infant children and the spots that are available are cost prohibitive. Work requirements for mothers, therefore, costs Kansas thousands in infant child care assistance. As you deliberate on this proposed legislation, I ask that you consider the vulnerable populations that will be impacted. I ask that you consider their future and the opportunities that this legislation can afford them.

Thank you,

Kim Brabits, MSW

Senate Public Health and Welfare

9806 West 87th Street | Overland Park, Kansas 66212 | p. 913.384.6608 | f. 913.384.6608

Date 2.7.17

Attachment 17