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KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Mark Desetti, Testimony  
House Bill 2261  
House Committee on Taxation  
February 18, 2019

Mister Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on HB 2261.

KNEA has an adopted position in favor of lowering or repealing the sales tax on food in Kansas. We believe that this tax hurts low income Kansans the most and puts children at risk. The cost of healthy food is high, and the high Kansas sales tax can make it particularly difficult for low income parents to provide healthy, nourishing meals for their families. To that end, we believe that a reduction in the food sales tax is perhaps the best way to provide tax relief to working families and help children at the same time.

As we continue to worry about the obesity epidemic, it is critically important that we acknowledge the fact that part of the blame rests with the kinds of foods that would be considered “affordable” – particularly fast food and highly processed food products. The food sales tax naturally moves families to purchase lower cost items over fresh fruits and vegetables or whole grain products. Lowering the food sales tax would help parents make better choices for their children.

As you explore options for tax relief, we hope that this kind of relief rises above income tax relief for wealthy individuals and corporations. We urge you to weigh every tax bill very carefully with an eye toward not only the obvious consequences of the bill but to the possibility of unintended consequences both positive and negative.

