

TESTIMONY OF HALEY KOTTLER  
THRIVING CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR  
KANSAS APPLESEED CENTER FOR LAW AND JUSTICE

-  
COMMITTEE ON TAXATION  
**IN SUPPORT OF HB 2091**  
JANUARY 28, 2021

Members of the House Committee on Taxation:

My name is Haley Kottler; I am a Campaign Director for Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to the belief that Kansans, working together, can build a state full of thriving, inclusive, and just communities.

**Kansas Appleseed supports HB 2091.** The refundable food sales tax credit proposed in this bill is a targeted measure that will help Kansans with low-incomes purchase the food they need. Addressing hunger in Kansas is more essential now than ever as food insecurity has grown in the wake of COVID-19. The refundable tax credit is a smart policy option for implementing that assistance for those who need it.

Food insecurity is on the rise. According to Household Pulse Survey data collected December 9-21, 2020, approximately 29 million adults (14%) reported their household sometimes or often didn't get enough to eat in the last seven days — up 7 million since last August.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, 90 million adults (38%) reported it was somewhat or very difficult for their household to pay for usual expenses in the last seven days — an increase of 13 million adults since last August.<sup>2</sup> Both of these Pulse Survey numbers are at their highest point since last August.

Current food assistance is helping, but it is not enough. The number of Kansas SNAP recipients has gone down each month since June 2020, even as survey respondents are saying the need is

---

<sup>1</sup> Zippel, C. Hardship Growing as Pandemic Enters 11th Month, New Census Figures Show. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. 2021.

<https://www.cbpp.org/blog/hardship-growing-as-pandemic-enters-11th-month-new-census-figures-show>

<sup>2</sup> Id.

greater than ever.<sup>3</sup> Because of severe restrictions on food assistance that were passed in 2015 and 2016 as part of the “Hope Act,” many Kansans who need food assistance are not receiving it.<sup>4</sup> The refundable food sales tax credit will not fix this problem, but it will help fill the gap.

Refundable tax credits are effective policy measures that enhance economic efficiency, especially when they encourage behavior with positive externalities like food purchases.<sup>5</sup> A conservative estimate of the economic impact of food assistance is a \$1.54 growth in the economy for every \$1 spent, with some research showing that multiplier effect as high as \$2 for every \$1 spent, particularly in economic downturns.<sup>6</sup> Other refundable tax credits, like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) have a substantial body of research showing their structure helps promote work, reduce poverty, and support children’s development.<sup>7</sup>

If we want to see Kansans thrive, we need to address the rise in food insecurity. The return of a refundable food sales tax credit as proposed in HB 2091 is a smart policy solution that will help low-income Kansans directly while also benefiting the Kansas economy as a whole. For these reasons, Kansas Appleseed urges support for HB 2091.

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/eas/Pages/EESreports.aspx> Kansas SNAP Numbers - Jun 2020: 213,382, Jul 2020: 207,893 Aug 2020: 207,103 Sep 2020: 205,447 Oct 2020: 200,655 Nov 2020: 199,159

<sup>4</sup> Kansas Appleseed. “HOPELESS: How the “HOPE Act” created barriers to SNAP in Kansas. 2020. [https://www.kansasappleseed.org/uploads/2/1/9/2/21929892/snap\\_barriers\\_report\\_hopeless\\_fnl.pdf](https://www.kansasappleseed.org/uploads/2/1/9/2/21929892/snap_barriers_report_hopeless_fnl.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Batchelder, L. EFFICIENCY AND TAX INCENTIVES: THE CASE FOR REFUNDABLE TAX CREDITS. Stanford Law Review. 2006.

<http://www.stanfordlawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2010/04/batchelder.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Canning, P. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier. United States Department of Agriculture. 2019.

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=93528>

<sup>7</sup> Marr, C. EITC and Child Tax Credit Promote Work, Reduce Poverty, and Support Children’s Development, Research Finds. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. 2015.

<https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/6-26-12tax.pdf>