



February 6, 2023

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Kansas Food Bank

Second Harvest Community Food Bank

Testimony in support of HB 2111—Committee on Taxation

Chairman Smith and members of the Committee:

This testimony is submitted on behalf of Harvesters—The Community Food Network, the Kansas Food Bank and Second Harvest Community Food Bank, which together serve the food insecure in all 105 counties in the state. Last year, our networks of charitable food pantries distributed more than 44 million pounds of food to those in need in Kansas, from our smallest rural communities to major metropolitan areas.

We support House Bill 2111 because Kansas' state-level sales tax on food is regressive and places a significant burden on our most vulnerable citizens. 9.7 % of people in Kansas are food insecure. That's more than 280,000 Kansans who may not know where their next meal is coming from. And the food insecurity rate among Kansas children is even higher at 14.6%--1 out of 7 children. Immediately eliminating the sales tax on food will help all Kansans have better access to the nutritious food they need to survive and thrive.

But food security is about more than just food—it's about family resources. And because of this, we also support the elimination of the state-level tax on diapers and feminine hygiene products, which will help those in need meet their basic needs. Low-income individuals and families spend a larger portion of their income on food and other basic necessities so removing these taxes will help our most vulnerable neighbors the most.

As Kansans face record food inflation, the state's budget surplus continues to grow. It is time to immediately remove the sales tax on food for the benefit of every single Kansan. It is time to completely eliminate these taxes. Kansans have waited too long already.