

Good afternoon Representative Averkamp and members of the Welfare Reform Committee,

My name is Jessica Cooney, I live in Lawrence, KS, and I am the Food Access Program Manager for Cultivate Kansas City. Through our work we manage Double Up Food Bucks for the Kansas City metro area farmers markets. Double Up Food Bucks is a dollar-for-dollar match incentive program that provides SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program) recipients across the state of Kansas with additional funds to be spent on fresh local produce at farmers markets and locally-owned grocery stores.

Our program has been operating in some capacity since 2009 and has seen incredible growth since then. Since 2019, we have distributed close to \$500,000 in match incentive – meaning almost one million dollars have been spent on fresh local produce to support not only Kansas families but also Kansas farmers and the communities in which they grow. While this number represents the Kansas City metro farmers markets, the program itself is currently operating in 34 grocery stores and 38 farmers markets across the state, meaning its impact is incredibly widespread and growing more each year.

Programs like Double Up Food Bucks exist because of the current limitations surrounding SNAP. It helps SNAP participants stretch their funds and increase the nutritional health of their families. Cutting eligibility to SNAP in any capacity does not just harm the participants. It has lasting effects across communities, including small businesses and farmers who benefit from match incentives like Double Up Food Bucks. These programs help bolster low-income families and local economies alike by keeping funds in Kansas communities.

I urge you to vote NO on HB 2141. Not only for the individuals who will be harmed but for the repercussions it will have on locally-owned grocery stores, farmers markets, farmers, and small businesses across the state.

Thank you for your time,

Jessica Cooney
Food Access Program Manager
jessica@cultivatekc.org