



March 22nd, 2023

Haley Kottler, Campaign Director
Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
Verbal Testimony in Opposition to HB 2141
Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

Kansas Appleseed is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to the belief that Kansans, working together, can build a state full of thriving, inclusive and just communities. Kansas Appleseed has a long history of working to increase food security to all Kansans through SNAP food assistance as well as Child Nutrition Programs. Simply put, we work with Kansans everyday that struggle to navigate our systems for benefits that are meant specifically for them, and yet this bill will continue to make the process even more difficult.

Kansas Appleseed opposes HB 2141, which would make it harder for Kansans and their families to put food on the table by restricting access to the SNAP food assistance program.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest food assistance program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Simply put, SNAP is our nation's most critical anti-hunger program. SNAP helps out of poverty, supplementing them with extra resources to provide a nutritious and adequate diet. SNAP was one of the key programs used to mitigate the damaging impact of COVID in 2020. SNAP benefits are an essential part of many food insecure Kansans budgets.

SNAP benefits are an essential part of increasing a family's overall budget. Reducing this budget puts children at increased risk of food insecurity and inadequate nutrition, and at greater risk of suffering long term consequences to their educational achievement and health.¹ Research demonstrates that greater access to SNAP results in reduction in hunger, improved dietary intake, improved academic performance, improved mental health, improved economic self-sufficiency, improved local economies, improved job growth, and reduction of poverty.²

There is no evidence conditioning food assistance on child support cooperation results in more child support payments.³ Conditioning SNAP benefits on child support cooperation actually just makes things

¹ Llobrera, J. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. 2020.

² Grafton, H. "The Role of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Improving Health and Well-Being." Food Research & Action Center. 2017. <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/hunger-health-role-snap-improving-health-well-being.pdf>

³ Llobrera, J. "Child Support Cooperation Requirements in SNAP are Unproven, Costly, and Put Families at Risk." Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. 2020. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/child-support-cooperation-requirements-in-snap-are-unproven-costly-and-put>



harder for low-income parents trying to provide food and childcare for their children.⁴ These requirements are counterproductive when parents are cut off from the stabilizing supports that would otherwise allow them to have better access to better paying jobs necessary for fulfilling child support obligations.

1 in 10 Kansans– and 1 in 7 Kansas Kids are facing food insecurity right now. In some areas of the state, such as Southeast Kansas, the number of Kansans facing food insecurity is much higher– closer to 1 in 7.⁵ Let's work together on practical policy solutions that increase access to food for Kansas families.

Thank you for your time today and I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.

⁴ Cancian, M. "Reforming Policy for Single- Parent Families to Reduce Child Poverty." RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences. 2018. <https://www.rsfjournal.org/content/rsfjss/4/2/91.full.pdf>

⁵ <https://map.feedingamerica.org/>