

To whom it may concern,

I am a Program Director at the Community Health Council of Wyandotte County. My program, the Kansas Assistance Network, assists individuals with social service applications such as Medicaid, SNAP, TANF and childcare assistance. I would like to express my concern and opposition for HB2140 that would increase the age range of able-bodied adults without dependents required to complete an employment training program to receive food assistance from 49 to 59. I oppose this bill because it would negatively impact the families that I assist by creating an unnecessary burden on our most disadvantaged individuals. Also, work requirements haven't been shown to support long-term employment so adding more people to the work training requirement would cost Kansas taxpayers' money needlessly.

In my direct experience helping families apply for SNAP benefits, I would estimate that nearly all adults without children who complete SNAP applications have medical or mental health circumstances that limit their ability to work or attend school. Those who can work, do work, therefore this bill will impact those who are too sick to work but not sick enough to obtain disability status or are in the extremely long process of obtaining disability benefits. In case you're unaware, disability benefits are extremely difficult to obtain. It's estimated that the average person is denied 3 times before being approved. The process is complex and can take years.

One KS resident, who was assisted through the application process, was denied disability for the third time in 10 years. He has multiple skeletal issues that restrict his ability to stand or lift objects over 10lbs. He cannot drive and suffers from dyslexia which keeps him from getting any employment that requires reading skills. Fortunately, he has family members to support him with some vital resources, and he currently qualifies for SNAP benefits so he's able to purchase his own food. If HB2140 is passed, my client would be required to go through the employment training which will not benefit his situation and require his family members (who all work full-time) to take him to and from the trainings, potentially impacting their own employment. This person is just one of many who I've helped that would be negatively impacted by this legislation. By forcing more people to complete employment training who ultimately cannot work, Kansas is adding unnecessarily to the burden these individuals face and potentially reduces their intake of nutritious foods leading to more illness and injury.

Because most of the population affected by HB2140 are unable to work, it's also my belief that this bill is a waste of taxpayer money. Vigorous studies on the longevity of employment and SNAP work requirements support this belief by indicating that stable employment gained by work requirements and training programs is often temporary and permanent employment is the exception, not the norm.

Please consider these remarks when considering HB2140. Our organization wants what's best for Kansans and works tirelessly to improve the lives of vulnerable populations. I believe this bill would hurt our already suffering community. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Molly Gotobed
Program Director

913.371.9298

mgotobed@wycohealth.com
www.wycohealth.com

803 Armstrong Ave,
Kansas City, KS 66101