



**Written Testimony Re: HB 2673
House Welfare Reform Committee
Presented by Derek Hein
on behalf of
Kansas Beverage Association
February 13th, 2024**

Chairman Averkamp and Members of the House Welfare Reform Committee:

My name is Derek Hein, and I serve as Executive Director for the Kansas Beverage Association (KBA). The KBA is the state trade association for non-alcoholic beverage bottling companies operating in Kansas. Products manufactured and distributed by members of the KBA include soft drinks, bottled waters, isotonic drinks, juice, juice drinks, sports drinks, dairy-based beverages, teas, and other beverages. We are proud to be a part of the fabric of our great state.

HB 2673 would direct the Secretary for Children and Families to request a waiver from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that would allow the state to prohibit the purchase of candy and soft drinks with food assistance benefits.

The Kansas Beverage Association strongly opposes HB 2673.

Keep big government out of our grocery carts. America's beverage companies are driving real changes in grocery aisles that lead to better outcomes for all Americans. Because of their transformative innovation, nearly 60 percent of beverages sold today contain zero sugar. Providing more choices with less sugar and smaller portion sizes along with clear information is the better way to support families in their efforts to achieve balance.

Government should not be in the business of deciding what people eat or drink. All Americans deserve the dignity of choice, including families who find themselves in the position of needing temporary financial help with groceries. This will not save taxpayer dollars but would put us on a slippery slope of government bureaucrats having control over food and beverage decisions for American families. This would ultimately grow the size and intrusion of the federal government.



Restrictions don't work. Restricting one segment of the population from one aisle in the grocery store just because they need government assistance is not fair. Restricting SNAP purchases won't improve public health. Beverages account for only 6 percent of the calories in the average American diet, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture analysis. Restrictions on beverages do not affect calories from foods, where people get 94 percent of the calories in their diets.

It would be unprecedented to allow the government to draw up a list of "good foods" and "bad foods," and for good reason – it would create more bureaucracy and create a food code more complicated and arbitrary than the tax code. A "good food" and "bad food" list could impact many industries and lead to unchecked political influence into other food groups such as red meat.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote down HB 2673.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.