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Written Testimony - Opponent
House Bill 2141
Senate Committee on Public Health & Welfare
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Chairwoman Gossage, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition of House Bill 2141.

Kansas NEA believes there is a strong correlation between poverty and under achievement in education. Educators know that when a child comes to school hungry, it is more difficult for them to learn. We also know that barriers for parents are barriers for children. We oppose House Bill 2141 because it will make it hard for children and parents to get enough food to eat.

The changes proposed in House Bill 2141 fail to recognize that parents can make informal support agreements that do not involve Child Support Services. It also fails to recognize that some parents forego making any support agreements out of concern for their safety and their children's safety. Further, it fails to recognize that sometimes Kansas parents face temporarily difficult circumstances outside of their control.

House Bill 2141 also substantially increases administrative expenses. These expenses are the only state dollars used to run the food assistance program. The additional state funds required by the changes proposed in House Bill 2141 could otherwise be used for programs that benefit all Kansas children rather than going towards the implementation of a burdensome and punitive bill.

In short, House Bill 2141 does not reflect Kansas values. We should be working to combat the effects of poverty, not making it harder for Kansas children and families. This bill would make it less likely that parents can support their children and more likely that their children go hungry. Kansas NEA believes that no child should struggle to learn because their bellies are empty.

We urge the committee to reject House Bill 2141.