March 3, 2026

Kansas Senate Committee on Government Efficiency
300 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: Health Forward Foundation opposition to House Bill 2731 - Requiring the Secretary for Children and Families and the Office of the Inspector General to exchange information and documents related to cash assistance, childcare assistance and food assistance fraud investigations

Chair Erickson and Members of the Senate Committee on Government Efficiency:

On behalf of the Health Forward Foundation (Health Forward), I submit this testimony in opposition to House Bill 2731, which would establish a data-sharing agreement to facilitate the detection, investigation, and prosecution of fraud in the cash assistance, childcare assistance, and food assistance program. Health Forward is a public health foundation dedicated to advancing equitable health care access and outcomes. Individuals who receive SNAP benefits report better health outcomes and lower healthcare costs and any efforts that reduced participation, whether intentionally or unintentionally, will negatively impact the health of Kansans.[i]

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) already investigates fraud within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). As a result, this bill would require state funding to duplicate existing efforts.

According to a 2026 report from the Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit (KLDPA), the SNAP payment error rate in Kansas is primarily driven by the complexity of SNAP rules, Department of Children and Families (DCF) staff turnover, and inconsistent verification processes, which is not fraud.[ii] Establishing a new fraud detection unit would therefore target an issue that is not a primary cause of payment errors. The scare state budget dollars that would be used to fund the fraud until could instead be put toward addressing the actual causes of payment error rates.

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Instead, KLDPA recommended investing in updates to the system that guides staff through the application process, improving staff retention, and streamlining application and verification procedures. Kansas should prioritize these evidence-based improvements and address needs identified by DCF to meaningfully reduce SNAP payment errors. If SNAP payment error rates rise, the state may be required to assume a greater share of program costs or face federal penalties. State investments should focus on reducing errors that threaten fiscal stability rather than diverting funding to create a duplicative fraud unit.

Expanded fraud detection activities could also interrupt benefits for eligible Kansans due to increased scrutiny and administrative burden. Disruptions in SNAP access are associated with poorer health outcomes.[iii] Such enforcement efforts may also disproportionately affect communities already facing barriers to food access, including rural communities and communities of color, which would worsen inequities in health care access and health outcomes.

For these reasons, Health Forward Foundation respectfully urges the Committee to vote **no** on HB 2731. Instead, Kansas should invest in the infrastructure use for application and eligibility verification for SNAP and Medicaid to reduce errors and ensure eligible Kansans can access essential benefits. Please contact **eshankland@healthforward.org** with any questions or requests for additional information.

Sincerely,

Emma Shankland
Impact Strategist – Policy
Health Forward Foundation

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[i]Datz, T. (2025, August 21). *SNAP funding cuts threaten food security, health*. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Retrieved from https://hsph.harvard.edu/news/snap-funding-cuts-threaten-food-security-health/.
[ii]Kansas Legislative Division of Post Audit. (2006). *Reviewing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program payment error rates and benefit card transactions, Part 1*. Retrieved from https://www.kslpa.gov/audit-report-library/reviewing-supplemental-nutrition-assistanceprogram-payment-error-rates-and-benefit-card-transactions-part-1/.
[iii]Bleich, S. N., & Plata-Nino, G. (2026). Changes to SNAP under HR 1 and the implications for food insecurity. *JAMA Health Forum*, 7(1), e260158. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamahealthforum.2026.0158.