



Feb 1, 2024

Chair Francis Averkamp
House Committee on Welfare Reform
HB 2627, neutral written

I am writing on behalf of the American Heart Association (AHA) regarding HB 2627, which reaffirms barriers for those accessing the SNAP food assistance program. SNAP benefits are 100% federally funded. However, Kansas has several policies in place that result in a loss of food access for families. We believe the legislature should be improving access to these programs.

AHA opposes the broad-based categorical eligibility (BBCE) ban. BBCE lets states adopt less restrictive asset tests so that families can have modest savings without losing SNAP benefits. Evidence suggests that BBCE simplifies the application process for potential SNAP participants and reduces administrative costs for state agencies. AHA also opposes other restrictions, such as drug felony disqualification and work requirements.

- SNAP plays a crucial role in reducing poverty in America.
 - SNAP removed 8.4 million people from poverty in 2015.ⁱ
- SNAP beneficiaries are truly the poorest among us.
 - SNAP households with gross monthly income less than or equal to 50% of the Federal poverty guidelines received 56% of all benefits. This is approximately \$822 monthly for a family of two.ⁱⁱ
- SNAP benefits have a bigger impact on rural communities.ⁱⁱⁱ SNAP benefits free up money that would otherwise be spent on food.

Sadly, HB 2627 contributes to negative perceptions of Kansans who rely on these programs to provide for themselves and their families. These are stroke and cardiac caregivers, people living with cardiovascular disease and diabetes including seniors, folks recovering from strokes, and low-income families that rely on food assistance for overall wellbeing and good mental health.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Kari A. Rinker'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ⁱ Wheaton L, Tran V. The Antipoverty Effects of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Urban Institute; February 2018. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/antipoverty-effects-supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program>.

ⁱⁱ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Policy Basics: Introduction to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). March 2016. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/policy-basics-the-supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>.

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/102287/err-296_summary.pdf?v=5769.6