

Dear Chairman Proctor and Members of the House Elections Committee,

My name is Ashley Hernandez, and I serve as the Organizing and Policy Coordinator for the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth's Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation. I am here today to speak in **opposition to HB 2491**.

Our faith calls us to uphold the **inherent dignity of every human person** and protect the **common good**, which means ensuring that public policy prioritizes justice, solidarity, and the care of the most vulnerable among us.

As written, HB 2491 would require every state agency providing public-funded benefits to collect and report quarterly the names and addresses of non-citizen recipients to the Secretary of State. **This requirement raises serious moral, legal, and practical concerns.**

First, this bill poses significant **privacy and safety risks** that undermine human dignity. Every person has a right to personal security and to live free from fear. Mandating the compilation and transfer of sensitive personal information without a clearly defined purpose, limitations on use, or meaningful safeguards creates a database that exposes individuals and families to potential harassment, exploitation, or harm. The bill contains no provisions addressing confidentiality, data protection, or misuse, which is especially concerning when applied to populations already vulnerable to discrimination.

Second, HB 2491 offers poor **stewardship of public resources**. It imposes an unfunded mandate on state agencies that are already operating under constrained budgets and staffing limitations. Kansas has worked diligently to manage its fiscal resources responsibly, yet this bill provides no appropriation to cover the administrative costs associated with compliance, including system development, staff time, auditing, and legal review. Diverting public funds away from essential services to support unnecessary reporting requirements does not serve the common good.

This legislation also **disregards the principle of subsidiarity** by assigning state agencies responsibilities that properly belong at the federal level. Kansas already complies with federal eligibility requirements governing access to public benefits. Programs such as Medicaid and SNAP are limited to citizens and federally defined "qualified noncitizens," with verification occurring at the point of eligibility determination. HB 2491 duplicates existing processes and adds a reporting layer that serves no clear legal or policy purpose. Immigration enforcement and status monitoring are federal responsibilities, not the role of Kansas agencies or the Secretary of State.

Additionally, creating a registry based on immigration status raises serious **constitutional and civil rights concerns**. We should be rejecting policies that result in unjust discrimination or exclusion instead of creating more. National origin and race are protected classes under the Kansas Acts Against Discrimination, and unrestricted collection and reporting of personal data

based on immigration status risks disparate impact. Such policies may deter eligible individuals from accessing basic services, ultimately harming public health, community stability, and social welfare.

Finally, this bill undermines community **solidarity and social trust**, both of which are essential to a healthy and thriving society. Immigrants are integral members of Kansas communities and contribute significantly to the state's economy across multiple sectors. Policies that single out immigrant communities foster fear and mistrust, weakening relationships between residents and public institutions and imposing broader social and economic costs on the state.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to vote **NO** on HB 2491.

Thank you,

Ashley Hernandez, MPA  
Organizing and Policy Coordinator  
Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation