



# Testimony in Support of SB 85

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Committee on Welfare Reform

March 6, 2025

Steven Greene, on behalf of, Opportunity Solutions Project

Chairman Averkamp and members of the committee. My name is Steven Greene and I'm here to encourage support for Senate Bill 85 on behalf of Opportunity Solutions Project, a non-profit advocacy organization that seeks to improve lives through free enterprise, individual liberty, and a limited, accountable government.

The reforms in this bill have a simple goal: to get the right benefits to the right people in food stamps. Unfortunately, Kansas is not doing this today.

Kansas has an error rate in food stamps of more than 12 percent.<sup>1</sup> That's worse than the national average and worse than each of Kansas's neighbors: Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma.<sup>2</sup> Those are dollars going out the door improperly, instead of to those who really need them.

The high error rate is no accident. Kansas doesn't require households to report changes between recertifications unless the change makes them fully ineligible.<sup>3</sup>

Kansas's improper payment rate has cost the state. This bill addresses the issues in the state's food stamp program. By requiring monthly data cross-checks of food stamp enrollment against death, lottery, incarceration records, and potential changes in residency, and quarterly cross-checks against wages, tax, and income records, Kansas can strengthen its safety net and remove ineligible individuals, bringing the focus back to those with a true need. When someone dies, they should no longer collect food stamps. When someone wins the lottery, they should no longer collect food stamps. And when someone moves to another state, they should stop receiving benefits from that state.

Many other states, including Arkansas, Florida, and Oklahoma, have taken action to apply these commonsense checks.<sup>4-5-6</sup>

The good news is that Kansas already has these records. This bill simply says: Check those lists against the list of food stamp beneficiaries and make sure folks are still eligible.

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<sup>1</sup> Food and Nutrition Service, "Supplemental nutrition assistance program: payment error rates fiscal year 2023," U.S. Department of Agriculture (2023), <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-fy23-qc-payment-error-rate.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Food and Nutrition Service, "State Options Report," U.S. Department of Agriculture (2024), <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-16th-state-options-report-june24.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> A.C.A. § 20-76-215(c).

<sup>5</sup> Fla. Admin. Code R. 65A-1.205(6)(a).

<sup>6</sup> O.A.C. § 340:65-3-4.

And by cross-checking data from federal sources, Kansas can get a better picture of its enrollees, including those from other states who might be taking advantage of the program in Kansas. Other states already do this. States like Iowa, Nebraska, Ohio, and Oklahoma cross-check federal databases to ensure the integrity of their food stamp programs.<sup>7-8-9-10</sup>

This bill puts Kansas on a more sustainable path. Using commonsense data checks, this bill will help strengthen the program, defend taxpayer dollars, and protect the truly needy on the food stamps program.

Opportunity Solutions Project is pleased to offer our support for this legislation. Thank you.

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<sup>7</sup> Iowa Code § 239.4(2).

<sup>8</sup> Nebraska Admin. Code, Title 475, Ch. 2, § 003.02.

<sup>9</sup> ORC Ann. 4141.162(4) and OAC Ann. 5101:4-7-09.

<sup>10</sup> O.A.C. § 340:65-3-1(e)(2)(B), O.A.C. § 340:65-3-4(4).