

February 10, 2026

Kansas House Welfare Reform Committee
300 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: Health Forward Foundation opposition to House Bill 2731 - Directing the Secretary for Children and Families to contract with the Office of the Inspector General to establish a fraud detection unit for the food assistance program

Chair Averkamp and Members of the House Welfare Committee:

On behalf of the Health Forward Foundation (Health Forward), I submit this testimony in opposition to House Bill 2731, which would establish a fraud detection unit to detect, investigate, and assist in prosecuting fraud in the 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.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 federal 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 scarce state budget dollars that would be used to fund the fraud unit could instead be put toward addressing the actual causes of payment error rates.

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 or Medicaid 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.

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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. 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

ⁱDatz, 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/>.

ⁱⁱKansas 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-assistance-program-payment-error-rates-and-benefit-card-transactions-part-1/>.