



February 11, 2025

Karen Siebert

Advocacy & Public Policy Advisor, Harvesters—The Community Food Network

Kansas Food Bank

Second Harvest Community Food Bank

Testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 161

Chairwoman Erickson and members of the Committee:

This testimony is submitted on behalf of Harvesters—The Community Food Network, the Kansas Food Bank and Second Harvest Community Food Bank, which together serve the hungry and food insecure in all 105 counties in the state. Last year, our networks of charitable food pantries distributed more than 46 million pounds of food to those in need in Kansas, from our smallest rural communities to major metropolitan areas.

We oppose Senate Bill 161 requiring approval by an act of the legislature prior to any state agency seeking or implementing any public assistance program waiver or other authorization from the federal government that expands eligibility for any public assistance program or increases cost to the state.

While we are concerned about the impact on Kansans served by agencies across state government, our testimony is focused on the impact on the SNAP/Food Assistance program administered by DCF. We are opposed for three main reasons: 1) the bill is unnecessary, 2) its language is vague and confusing and 3) these provisions will make state government less responsive to the needs of Kansans.

This bill is unnecessary because the USDA already requires that SNAP waivers must “result in a more effective and efficient administration of the program” in order to receive federal approval (see [7 CFR 272.3\(c\)](#)). It is unclear what this bill is trying to accomplish.

The bill would also create unnecessary confusion and delay for DCF (under any administration) given the vagueness of the bill language. For example, the SNAP Employment & Training state plan must be authorized by the USDA. Would a plan be allowed that included a computer system upgrade requiring initial expenditures by the state but resulting in long-term savings?

And this bill would make the state much less responsive to the needs of Kansans. Given the part-time nature of the Kansas legislature, common sense improvements to increase the efficiency and

effectiveness of the program is clearly within the authority of the Administration and shouldn't be delayed by a requirement to seek prior approval from the legislature.

Similarly, programs like Disaster SNAP can be utilized when a community is devastated by a natural disaster like the tornado in Greensburg. D-SNAP uses different standards to meet the unique needs of disaster survivors. D-SNAP does not require a waiver, but does require federal approval and would involve expanding eligibility in the short term to meet the needs of Kansans facing unexpected hardship.

Please vote no on SB 161. This bill will sow confusion and make Kansas government less responsive to the needs of its citizens.