



Kansas
Breastfeeding
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Brenda Bandy, Executive Director
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition
Opponent Written Testimony for SB 161
Senate Committee on Government Efficiency

Dear Chair Erickson and Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition in opposition to SB 161, which requires legislative approval prior to any state agency seeking or implementing a 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.

The Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition (KBC) protects, supports, and promotes breastfeeding to improve the health and well-being of Kansas mothers and babies. SB 161 could be incredibly detrimental to mothers and babies for the following reasons:

1. **Delayed Access to Breastfeeding Support:** Breastfeeding is critical for maternal and infant health, providing essential nutrients and antibodies. Breastfeeding is a time-sensitive issue—mothers and babies need support in critical early days and weeks. Requiring additional legislative approval could introduce unnecessary delays and red tape, making it harder for state agencies to implement policies that help mothers with breastfeeding challenges. Programs like Medicaid, WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), and Title V Maternal and Child Health programs provide critical breastfeeding education, lactation support services, and breastfeeding supplies like breast pumps. Requiring legislative approval by state agencies could delay efforts to expand or enhance breastfeeding support, leaving mothers without the resources they need to breastfeed successfully, especially during the early stages when the infant's health is most vulnerable.
2. **Reduced Flexibility to Address Breastfeeding Barriers:** Breastfeeding support programs need to be flexible and able to respond to emerging challenges and research. For example, public health crises or economic hardships can disproportionately affect breastfeeding mothers, making it harder for them to access proper nutrition, education, and breastfeeding support. Requiring legislative approval could prevent agencies from quickly adjusting eligibility or expanding services to meet those needs.
3. **Inequities Between States in Access to Breastfeeding Support:** Under SB 161, Kansas could be unable to act as quickly as other states that do not require such approval. This could lead to disparities in access to breastfeeding support, particularly for mothers in low-income or rural areas where resources are already limited. States that face these approval hurdles may not be able to respond effectively to the needs of breastfeeding mothers, leading to inequitable access to vital services.

In conclusion, requiring legislative approval by state agencies working to improve breastfeeding support programs could delay or limit access to essential resources for mothers and babies, particularly during the crucial early stages of breastfeeding. This could ultimately hinder efforts to promote breastfeeding and improve the health and well-being of both mothers and infants.

Mission To improve the health and well-being of Kansans by working collaboratively to promote, protect and support breastfeeding.

Vision Breastfeeding is normal and supported throughout Kansas.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony to SB 161. Please feel free to contact me at bbandy@ksbreastfeeding.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenda Bandy".

Brenda Bandy, IBCLC
Executive Director
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition