

RS 2581 Proponent Testimony
Senate Committee on Government Efficiency
Accountability in Public assistance for school lunches
Tanner Tempel- Deputy State Director, Americans for Prosperity
January 27, 2026



Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill RS 2581. Senate Bill RS 2581 is a commonsense accountability measure that protects taxpayer trust, ensures public benefits are properly targeted, and reaffirms the Legislature's authority over major policy decisions.

Accountability in Public Assistance Programs

Kansas families expect public assistance programs to be fair, transparent, and well-managed. RS 2581 takes a reasonable step by requiring school districts to verify gross household income earned for students who qualify for free meals through application-based eligibility.

Importantly, this bill does not apply to students who qualify through direct certification. That distinction matters. RS 2581 focuses verification only where it is appropriate, while ensuring students who automatically qualify through other programs continue to receive assistance without disruption.

Verification is not punitive. It is a basic safeguard that exists across many public programs. Without it, limited resources are stretched thinner, and the families who truly need help risk being crowded out.

Legislative Oversight of Federal Programs

RS 2581 also addresses a broader issue: major policy changes being implemented without legislative approval.

The Community Eligibility Provision represents a significant shift in education and nutrition policy, with long-term implications for funding, local control, and state authority. Decisions of this magnitude should not be made unilaterally through administrative action.

RS 2581 does not prohibit participation in Community Eligibility. It simply requires that the Legislature consent before school districts seek authorization, or when the Legislature is not in session, that temporary oversight be exercised by the Legislative Coordinating Council.

That is not obstruction; it is responsible governance.

Conclusion

Kansas can support students in need while still respecting taxpayers and preserving Legislature's constitutional role. Senate Bill RS 2581 strikes that balance by reinforcing accountability, transparency, and proper oversight.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to support Senate Bill RS 2581.

Thank you,

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