

## Written Testimony in Opposition to the Bill

Senate Committee on Government Efficiency

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding this bill.

I am a school nutrition administrator in Kansas, and I am concerned that this proposal would create unnecessary administrative burden for school districts and disrupt established, federally authorized processes that currently function effectively.

First, the requirement to verify household income for every student who qualifies for free meals through an application represents a significant departure from long-standing federal National School Lunch Program policy. Federal regulations intentionally limit verification to a small, statistically valid sample in order to balance program integrity with administrative feasibility. Requiring 100% verification would substantially increase workload for school districts, diverting limited staff time and resources away from meal service and other essential operations, while providing little additional benefit given that eligibility already relies on direct certification and data matching.

School nutrition programs are designed to be self-sustaining and do not rely on local general fund support. This structure allows districts to preserve general fund dollars for classrooms, teachers, and instruction. Imposing a large, unfunded administrative mandate on meal programs risks shifting resources away from education and toward paperwork, without improving accountability.

Additionally, free and reduced-price meal data are used beyond meal eligibility and directly affect Title I and at-risk funding calculations. Expanding verification to all applications increases the likelihood of processing errors and delays, which can distort poverty metrics and create funding instability and audit risk for schools.

Second, the provisions requiring legislative or Legislative Coordinating Council approval for participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) raise serious operational concerns. CEP is a long-standing, federally authorized option, and districts already undergo a rigorous, data-driven approval process reviewed by the Kansas State Department of Education within strict submission timelines. Adding an additional approval layer duplicates existing oversight, does not enhance fiscal accountability, and does not align with fixed federal and state deadlines required for implementation.

When approval is delayed or referred without a defined timeline, districts risk missing eligibility windows entirely. Because CEP planning must occur months in advance, any

unresolved approval effectively prevents participation, even when districts fully meet all federal and state requirements.

For clarity, the term “special assistance payments” referenced in the bill refers to standard federal meal reimbursements under CEP, not a separate or discretionary funding stream.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to consider the practical impacts of this proposal and to oppose provisions that introduce inefficiency, uncertainty, and unnecessary administrative burden into school meal programs that are already closely regulated and effectively administered.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ruchithri Favreau  
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