

January 23, 2026

To: Senate Committee on Governmental Efficiency, Chair Renee Erickson
Opponent Testimony on School Lunch Income Verification

Dear Members of the Kansas Senate Committee on Government Efficiency,

I am writing in my personal capacity to express opposition to this bill. In school districts with as many needs as the one I serve, I am cognizant just how important it is for our children, all children, to be able to have access to meals. For Wichita Public Schools, it is not lost on me that for so many of our students, the school meals they receive are the only reliable source of food they have. This underlies the reason our school district strives to ensure access to free school breakfast and lunch during the summer, and it underlies the reason why we strive to meaningfully partner with our churches, businesses, nonprofits, and community groups to help address the material conditions that impede our students' ability to learn and thrive. While we can certainly get into a philosophical and ideological conversation why so many children and adolescents in our society experience nutritional poverty and food insecurity, or in simpler terms, why so many of them go to bed without dinner, the bottom-line is that this proposal would create and exacerbate significant barriers which would make it harder for schools to keep kids fed. Both indirectly and directly, when we talk about the mental and behavioral health issues students are experiencing, the deprivation of food that they normally would have otherwise gotten through schools (and on another note, we must acknowledge the problematic reality that our education system is expected to tackle society's problems without society's resources), this bill would arguably make those mental and behavioral health issues even worse.

As someone who very much aligns with the broader vision of this committee to mitigate fraud, waste, and abuse, and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness and overall responsiveness of state government, this bill is not the right direction toward that vision; instead, only creating additional, unnecessary paperwork and red tape and further (over)bloating bureaucracy. This bill would directly undermine the impactful practice of the federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

Sincerely,

Ngoc Vuong
Wichita, Kansas