



January 23, 2026

To: Senate Committee on Government Efficiency,
Chairwoman Erickson

The Kansas Food Action Network represents hundreds of local leaders across the state working to strengthen their communities' food systems. Our members include small business owners, health coalitions, food councils, and locally elected officials. We support communities by providing resources, training, and networking opportunities, while advocating for policies that empower communities to design food systems that represent their unique needs.

Thank you, Chairwoman Erickson and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to share the Kansas Food Action Network's perspective on 26rs2581 (School Meals).

The Kansas Food Action Network (KFAN) strongly opposes this bill because it undermines local communities' ability to make decisions about the food systems that serve their residents. Our mission is grounded in the belief that those closest to the challenges should have the authority to shape solutions. By shifting decision-making from locally elected school boards and district leaders to the state, this proposal reduces local control and decreases administrative efficiency. Kansas communities deserve the autonomy to build food systems that respond to the needs of their residents, not one-size-fits-all mandates imposed from the state level.

This bill raises three main concerns for the Kansas Food Action Network:

Loss of local decision-making authority: This bill requires districts to seek permission from the Kansas Legislature before electing to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). The bill also mandates an exponential increase in the federally mandated annual income verification, even when local leaders have determined that the administrative burden outweighs the benefit. These requirements remove decision-making authority from school boards, concentrating it at the state level without improving program integrity.

Unnecessary administrative burden: School districts already report their intent to participate in CEP annually to the Kansas Department of Education. Adding another approval step is redundant and time-consuming.

Increased costs, especially for small and rural districts. The bill eliminates districts' flexibility to design verification processes that balance accuracy with available staff and resources. Smaller and rural districts would face disproportionate administrative strain and increased costs, as added verification, staffing, and compliance requirements would divert already limited local funds away from classrooms and student services.

In short, this bill limits local decision-making, adds red tape, and applies the same rules to all districts regardless of local needs. KFAN urges the Committee to oppose 26rs2581 and allow local school boards to continue making decisions about school meals that best serve their students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Kansas Food Action Network





SIGNATORIES

Organizations

El Centro Inc
Food and Farm Council of Riley County and City of Manhattan
Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition
Harvesters - The Community Food Network
Health & Wellness Coalition of Wichita
Kansas Farmers Union
Live Well Atchison County, Inc.
Lyon County Food and Farm Council
mRelief
Peace Connections
The Healthy Bourbon County Action Team
Wesley House
Wichita Public Schools
Food and Farm Council of Wichita and Sedgwick County

Private Citizens

Marilyn Logan , Allen County
Amy Jo McWhirt, Cowley County
Amanda Lindahl, Dickenson County
Julie Henry, Douglas County
Tyler Lindquist, Douglas County
Nancy Borthwick, Grant County
Gwen Wurst, Johnson County
Jessica Reth, Lyon County
Jacob Miller-Klugesherz, Pottawatomie County
Kara Bunce, Reno County
Kelli Snider-Short, Reno County
Adrienne Moore Baxter, Reno County
Nick Levendofsky, Republic County
Stephanie Pearl, Riley County
Adam Ast, Saline County
Beks Lohmeier, Saline County
Kirsty Hartley, Saline County
Lisa Newman, Saline County
Michelle Coats, Saline County
Danielle Ast, Saline County
Amy Draut, Sedgwick County
Jennifer Schmitz, Sedgwick County
Steven McMahon, Sedgwick County
Jo Gabel, Sedgwick County
Megan Gaede, Sheridan County

