

To: Senate Committee on Government Efficiency,
Chairwoman Erikson

Chairwoman Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to this bill. The Health & Wellness Coalition of Wichita is a group of local organizations, leaders, and residents working to improve food access, health outcomes, and community well-being in Wichita/Sedgwick County. We are deeply concerned that this proposal would create new barriers to free school meals and make it harder for schools in USD 259 to keep kids fed.

School meals help students show up ready to learn, support working families, and reduce hunger. This bill would require additional income verification and limit schools' ability to use the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). These changes add unnecessary paperwork, increase stigma for students, and shift focus away from education and toward bureaucracy.

Our schools already follow federal rules to determine eligibility and annually communicate our intent to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision with the Kansas Department of Education. CEP has been shown to work by reducing red tape while ensuring kids have access to nutritious meals; no changes are needed to the existing process.

Decisions about how to feed students should be left to schools and communities, not require additional legislative approval. Kansas should be focused on protecting access to school meals and maximizing federal nutrition dollars that support our children and local economies. We respectfully urge you to oppose this bill and protect school meals for Kansas students. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Shelley Rich
Facilitator
Health & Wellness Coalition