

TO: Senate Committee on Government Efficiency,
Chairwoman Erikson

Chairwoman Erikson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in opposition to proposed legislation that would require Kansas school districts to seek legislative approval to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and impose additional household income verification requirements.

I offer this perspective as a former first-grade teacher and a current community health educator.

In the classroom, I saw daily how access to school meals directly affects a child's ability to learn and feel secure at school. CEP removes barriers by providing universal meals without paperwork, stigma, or delays—allowing educators to focus on teaching and students to focus on learning.

Now working in the community, I see families navigating complex systems with limited time and resources. Mandating annual income verification for all students adds administrative burden without improving accountability and risks creating gaps in access for the children who need meals most.

CEP is a fully funded federal option with established safeguards. Locally elected school boards are best positioned to determine participation based on their community's needs. Shifting this authority to the state undermines local control and introduces unnecessary complexity.

I urge you to oppose this legislation and preserve local decision-making that ensures Kansas students have reliable access to school meals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Kara Bunce

Reno County, KS