



KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Timothy R. Graham
Director of Government Relations & Legislative Affairs
HEARING: School Lunch Reporting
Oral Testimony – **Oppose**
Senate Committee on Government Efficiency
January 27, 2026

Chairperson Erickson, members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to this bill.

Kansas NEA is a member-driven organization representing nearly 22,000 educators across the state of Kansas. Our members are organized into more than 265 local associations and work in schools and communities across nearly all 105 Kansas counties, serving students in urban, suburban, and rural districts alike.

The positions we advocate for are proposed, debated, and adopted by hundreds of educators selected by their peers to attend our annual Representative Assembly, reflecting the collective voice of education professionals of all political parties, beliefs, and backgrounds who are united by a commitment to Kansas public schools and the students they serve.

KNEA has several resolutions addressing the issue of student access to nutrition and basic needs supports.

C-3-9. FOOD INSECURITY

Kansas NEA believes that food insecurity is a threat to both the health and academic success of students and that local and state governments should develop, establish and implement policies to ensure that all students have access to fresh and nutritious food. Local school boards should likewise support efforts to seek effective solutions to food insecurity.

C-3-7. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN

Kansas NEA further believes that schools should provide a healthy breakfast and lunch so that students are alert and ready to learn.

These resolutions reflect daily classroom reality. That reality also explains why this bill raises concerns about student learning, federal compliance, and local implementation, which I will outline briefly.

Hunger Interferes With Learning in the Classroom

When students are hungry, they are not ready to learn—attention drops, behavior issues increase, and teachers are forced to manage basic needs instead of instruction. KNEA’s resolutions reflect a simple classroom reality: access to a healthy breakfast and lunch is essential so students can be alert, engaged, and able to succeed academically.

The Bill Creates Federal Compliance Risk for School Districts

This bill places school districts in a position where complying with state law may conflict with federally authorized options under the National School Lunch Program, particularly the Community Eligibility Provision. Federal law permits eligible districts to participate in CEP, and restricting that access through state-level approval requirements creates uncertainty, administrative risk, and potential exposure during federal program reviews.

The Bill Creates New, Unfunded Administrative Burdens for School Districts

This bill requires school districts to collect, verify, and manage household income documentation each year. That is time intensive and ongoing. Any additional staffing or administrative capacity needed to carry out these requirements would fall on local school districts, not the state, and the bill does not provide funding to support that work. As a result, districts would be forced to absorb the cost or divert resources away from classrooms and student services.

In closing, while this bill may be presented as an accountability measure, its practical effect is to make it harder for schools to ensure students have consistent access to meals, increase administrative burdens at the local level, and introduce uncertainty into districts' participation in a federal program designed to reduce barriers for students. From the classroom to the district office, this bill creates complications without improving outcomes for students.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in opposition to this bill.