



January 27, 2026

Senate Government Efficiency Committee

Chairman Sen. Renee Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony opposing Senate Bill 387. My name is Diosselyn Tot, and I represent the Kansas Latino Community Network, a community nonprofit that serves families and communities across Kansas.

From a community perspective, there are several practical considerations worth noting regarding this proposal.

First, access and participation. When enrollment processes for essential programs become more complex, participation can decline. Families may struggle with documentation, time constraints, language barriers, or confusion about requirements. Many of the parents we work with are already balancing multiple jobs and responsibilities with little flexibility. Adding more documentation requirements makes it harder — not easier — for eligible children to receive the meals they need to learn and grow.

This issue is also personal for me. As a student, I received free and reduced-price lunches. Having access to meals at school meant more than just food — it meant stability, dignity, and the chance to sit with classmates without worrying about whether I could eat that day. It was already easy to tell which families were struggling, and added barriers would only make those differences more visible and more difficult for kids.

In Kansas, this is not a small group of students. About 41.6% of Kansas public school students are eligible for free lunch, and many more qualify for reduced-price meals — meaning a significant share of students rely on these programs to meet their daily nutritional needs. When access becomes more complicated, participation can drop even though the need remains the same.

We have also seen what happens when meal access becomes harder. After pandemic-era universal meal programs ended, Kansas schools saw school meal debt rise to roughly \$23.5 million, reflecting how quickly families can struggle when meals are no longer easy to access. That financial strain ultimately affects schools, families, and students alike.

Second, school capacity. Schools in our own communities are already doing everything they can to support students while navigating constant changes and limited resources. Additional



verification requirements would place more administrative work on staff who are already stretched thin. That extra workload affects their ability to focus on the educational and social needs of students.

Third, family comfort, trust, and privacy. Asking families to provide more detailed financial information can feel intrusive and intimidating. We do not want parents to feel overwhelmed or discouraged from seeking support their children qualify for. Right now, many families already have concerns about how personal information is used and shared. Increasing data collection tied to something as basic as school meals may deepen mistrust and cause families to withdraw from programs their children depend on.

In the communities we serve across Kansas, school meals are a key part of ensuring students arrive in class ready to focus and learn. Policies that affect these programs can have ripple effects on attendance, behavior, and academic engagement.

Thank you for considering these community-level impacts as you review SB 387. I appreciate the opportunity to share perspectives from the families and students we work with every day. We urge the committee to please oppose this bill that will create more barriers for our families and above all our students, the future.

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