

**Testimony by Charlie Hunt with the Johnson County
Department of Health & Environment (JCDHE) to
Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare
Written Proponent for SB271 – February 5, 2026**

Chair Gossage and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 271 which would provide a permanent change to the income and eligibility requirements for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). JCDHE's mission is to promote and protect the health and environment for all who live, work and play in Johnson County. The health of our community and its ability to thrive depends on the health of everyone, including our most vulnerable community members. We need to ensure accessible and affordable health care for our state's children, regardless of familial income levels.

Absorbing the costs of uninsured clients that lack an ability to pay is one of the major expenses JCDHE, and thus Johnson County property taxpayers, face. Without establishing a permanent fix, the provision that has kept children whose families earned up to 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) eligible for CHIP coverage will expire June 30, 2026. This much-needed update would prevent families from finding themselves earning too much to qualify for Medicaid, while also being priced out of the private insurance sector, ultimately leaving even more children uninsured without access to necessary medical care. A number of these children will turn to JCDHE and will be served, but rather than allowing Medicaid to continue to cover the cost, the burden will fall on the county's property tax base.

With the expiration of the proviso on June 30, 2026, the number of uninsured children could increase significantly. As such, JCDHE asks that the committee recommend SB 271 favorably for passage and help keep children in Kansas healthy.

Sincerely,

Charlie Hunt, Director
Johnson County Department of Health & Environment

