



EPISCOPALCOMMUNITYSERVICES

Feeding the Hungry  *Changing Lives*

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Beau G. Heyen
President/CEO, Episcopal Community Services, Kansas City
Senate Concurrent Resolution 1604
Proponents

Dear Chairwoman Tyson and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of SCR 1604. Episcopal Community Services is a Kansas City area nonprofit working to engage the broader community in feeding the hungry and in empowering the poor to move beyond the barriers of poverty with dignity through education and job training. Through our work at the Kansas City Community Kitchen, a network of 17 food pantries and meal programs spanning across the entire Greater Kansas City area, and our Culinary Cornerstones Training Program, ECS represents a growing list of organizations and individuals committed to ending hunger and helping people move towards self-sustainability. This Fall, as we prepare to unveil our new Mobile Market concept to help address food deserts and health disparities in Wyandotte County, grocery access and taxes on food have become great areas of concern.

We believe that food is a basic human right, the most basic building block of individuals, families and communities. We know people need proper nutrition so that their bodies and brains are nourished to develop properly and function well. We also know that we cannot expect people to do the other things that are required for a good and stable life (work, school, seeing a doctor, healthy lifestyles, taking care of children and family, etc.) without food.

Kansas' state tax on food puts an unfair burden on low income families. For those struggling to get by, living paycheck to paycheck is extremely difficult. Decisions must often be made between paying rent, utilities, education and medical expenses or the purchasing of food, resulting in individuals and families opting to purchase cheaper, often unhealthy food.

Lowering the sales tax on food would allow more money to spent by families and individuals on healthy, fresh food, while also helping low income families stretch their dollars more effectively and reducing reliance on emergency food, such as food pantries and soup kitchens.

On behalf of our hunger relief network and those we serve, we request that the committee support SCR 1604. Please do not hesitate to let us know if there are any other opportunities to help move this important bill forward.

Thank you for allowing us to an opportunity to represent those we serve.

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