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Representative Adam Smith, Chair
House Committee on Taxation
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th St.
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Taxation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the LWGC Food Policy Council in support of HB 2487. LWGC FPC is an entity under the nonprofit organization Live Well Geary County that focuses on identifying the benefits and challenges of, and opportunities for a successful, sustainable local food system to support the residents of Geary County, to increase access to quality food, address hunger and food insecurity, and influence policy and decision making.

Geary County typically ranks #1 or #2 in food insecurity in Kansas. In addition, our demographics show a population with a higher percentage of low-income families who are burdened more from the food sales tax than other Kansans. Due to the fact eating healthy is more expensive, eliminating the state food sales tax provides Kansas residents more resources to purchase nutritious food for their families than the shelf stable kind our state sales tax presently encourages. If we can increase access to healthy food, we will not only reduce the risk of obesity but other chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes.

LWGC FPC urges legislators to pass HB 2487. Eliminating the state sales tax on food would encourage small businesses and grocery stores who struggle to compete with large chains because they have fewer supply resources. If we increase the number of local grocers, we decrease the distance our Kansans need to travel to purchase healthy food.

As a member of the LWGC FPC and having lived in Iowa where there was no sales tax on food in the early lean years of marriage, I can tell you how much that little extra meant to purchasing groceries and stretching the food budget to provide nutritious meals for a growing family.

Finally, Kansas is one of only 13 states to have a sales tax on groceries and we are surrounded by several states who have no food sales tax. If you are a young family looking for a place to reside the sales tax on food is a liability that Kansas can no longer afford. With nearly 3 billion dollars in surplus and a thriving economy, now is the time to eliminate this regressive tax.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in favor of this legislation. We ask you to keep this bill clean and focused on the food sales tax, and support HB 2487 for the health of all Kansans.

Sincerely,

Susan Jagerson,
Administrator, LWGC Food Policy Council

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