

DATE: March 8, 2022

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**RE: Opposition to Senate Bill 501—Committee on Public Health and Welfare**

Chairman Hilderbrand and members of the Committee:

As a lifelong Kansan and proud member of the Board of Directors for Harvesters Community Food Network, I am submitting this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 501.

In connection with my Board service for Harvesters, I know how hard Kansans who are working to make ends meet continue to struggle with food insecurity. SB 501 will bury these struggling food insecure Kansans in paperwork, and overwhelm them and the state workers trying to help them. Our state's food insecurity rate is already 12.1% (more than 350,000 Kansans) and SB 501 will make it worse.

In addition to these harms, SB 501 will add costs for Kansas taxpayers while making programs less effective. SB 501 will potentially add hundreds of employees to the state's payroll and costs tens of millions of dollars, while the state receives no economic benefit. In contrast, SB 501's onerous provisions will likely cost thousands of families to lose federal food benefits they would have spent in local grocery stores — harming local grocers — and instead push them to seek help from the state's already overburdened charitable food banks and pantries.

Our state's charitable food pantries are still seeing record need after two years of the pandemic. The charitable sector is already overwhelmed and cannot meet the needs of even more food insecure Kansans if SB 501 goes into effect and families lose the federal food benefits for which they are eligible.

I ask for your thoughtful consideration and vote in opposition to this bill that will bloat state government, cost Kansas taxpayers tens of millions of dollars, increase food insecurity among working poor Kansas families and put additional pressures on community food pantries trying to help their neighbors.

Kind regards,

*/s/ Carrie A. McAtee*