

SB 363: A RECIPE FOR MORE HUNGER IN KANSAS

Despite its stated purpose, SB 363 will increase inefficiency in the SNAP system, and ultimately vulnerable, hardworking Kansans will have to carry the burden of those consequences. It would put into state statute the restrictions on SNAP eligibility, increased work requirements, and bans on specific waivers The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (HR 1) enacted. It also requires KDHE and DCF to create a data-matching system to check families' SNAP eligibility on a monthly, semi-monthly, and quarterly basis. The resulting inefficiencies in SNAP administration mean the ever-growing number of Kansans struggling to put food on the table will have few options to turn to for relief.

DATA-MATCHING SYSTEM: AN INGREDIENT TO REDUCE ACCESS FOR ELIGIBLE FAMILIES

SB 363's data-matching system requirement will cost the state and vulnerable Kansans. Automated eligibility verification systems treat data gaps, mismatches, or missed notices as ineligibility, increasing the risk of wrongful terminations of eligible Kansans. The resulting unnecessary benefit loss and churn take valuable time and resources away from impacted families and the state. The system would shift agency resources toward repeated case closures and reopenings rather than accurate eligibility determinations. The system would also require significant upfront and ongoing costs. Given Kansas's existing fiscal pressures and efforts to reduce error rates, adding a complex automated system could increase errors and costs.

Families impacted would have to either go hungry or spend precious time navigating an already complex system to re-verify their eligibility. Most families using SNAP are employed and struggling to make ends meet in the face of rising costs and stagnant wages. The most recent data shows that hunger in the state continues to grow. Codifying a statutorial data matching system means those hungry, hardworking Kansans will be faced with even more obstacles despite their eligibility for assistance.

EXEMPTIONS & GEOGRAPHIC WAIVERS: AN INGREDIENT TO END THE ABILITY OF KANSAS TO TAKE CARE OF KANSANS

Kansans know the importance of taking care of your neighbor when they fall on hard times. As Senator Bob Dole wrote, "I know, too, there are people who, for reasons far beyond their control, need help. But I also know that the greatest social program in the world is a neighbor who cares about you." SB 363 would eliminate the state's ability to look out for neighbors in parts of the state that are experiencing exceptionally hard times due to no fault of their own, and take away tools to help communities recover from those hard times.

SB 363 codifies the federal HR 1 elimination of states' ability to request a waiver for localities with high unemployment rates or in areas with an insufficient number of jobs. Before HR 1, states could request a waiver for localities with high unemployment rates or in areas with an insufficient number of jobs. If the federal government ever reverses this HR 1 provision, Kansas would be precluding itself from a tool for reducing food insecurity in economically struggling parts of the state and stimulating those local economies.

SELF-ATTESTATION, CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY, WORK REQUIREMENTS: AN INGREDIENT TO TARGET AND HARM THE MOST VULNERABLE KANSANS

Under SB 363, about 5,500 Kansans who typically face the greatest barriers to working consistently to support their families could lose access to essential SNAP assistance. SB 363 prohibits DCF from accepting self-attestation for key eligibility factors. It also prevents Kansas from using flexible income or asset limits, broad-based categorical eligibility, or other state options that expand SNAP access. Additionally, SB 363 bans work-requirement waivers for able-bodied adults without dependents, with no exemptions for homeless individuals, veterans, or former foster youth. Finally, it expands the groups that may be subject to employment and training requirements.

Banning self-attestation would disproportionately harm people who lack documentation, including homeless individuals, migrant workers, and mixed-status families. Prohibiting tools like BBCE would further limit access and efficiency, despite evidence that BBCE reduces administrative costs, streamlines eligibility, and connects more families to nutrition assistance. Eliminating work-requirement waivers and expanding employment mandates ignores the reality that most SNAP recipients already work and that many who do not face health or caregiving barriers.