

Proponent

Written Testimony

February 5, 2023

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 Live Well Geary County and the LWGC Food Policy Council in support of **HB 2111** (Establishing a 0% state rate sales and use taxes for food and food ingredients and providing a sales tax exemption for children's diapers and feminine hygiene products.) LWGC is a non-profit organization that exists to inspire and advance healthy lifestyles in Geary County. LWGC FPC is an entity of 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, 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 by the food sales tax than other Kansans. Eating healthy is more expensive, and eliminating the state food sales tax now rather than later 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. Purchasing diapers and feminine products are costly and we often hear from young families about the burden of the cost of these necessities.

LWGC and LWGC FPC urge legislators to pass HB 2111. Establishing a 0% rate on the state sales tax now on food, and food ingredients would also 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 drive to purchase healthy food. Many of the target populations are without reliable transportation.

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Susan Jagerson

Susan Jagerson,
Director Live Well Geary County