

Testimony of Susan Stevens, resident of Kansas House District 37

I seem personally unaffected by the legislation banning many of our drug and poverty-impacted fellow Kansans from ever receiving food assistance via SNAP. Yet none of us is untouched by the disease of divisiveness, exclusion, and alienation currently crippling our nation. The light of our national motto -- e Pluribus Unum: out of many, one -- is clouded by our practices of racism, classism, and slavery -- and as we purportedly ended slavery, we maintained a form of it by allowing forced servitude for the incarcerated in our 13th amendment.

As we proclaimed our country a free land with opportunity for all, we institutionalized policies ensuring that those driven to make poor choices and commit crimes out of desperation, would thereafter be weighed down with obstacles to finding gainful employment and obtaining nutritious food, housing, healthcare, and other resources. Their resultant struggle to provide for their own children would drive many of those hungry, needy children to the same desperation, piling weight after weight upon their descendants, and ensuring a perpetual underclass who supposedly "had no one to blame but themselves."

The cries of protest we are hearing are not admonitions for the privileged to burrow further down under a mound of guilt, denial, and counter-accusations. They are exhortations to align our actions and public policy with the truth we know. To look to the light of equality and universal brotherhood, following it step by step until we rid our law books of every trace and shadow of oppression. Voting yes on Kansas House Bill 2215 is one such crucial step toward the light. Thank you for listening.