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Written testimony in support of House Bill 2091
House Taxation Committee

Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee:

This testimony is submitted on behalf of Harvesters—The Community Food Network, the regional food bank serving northeast Kansas. Our nonprofit network includes nearly 500 charitable organizations providing food assistance to hungry and food insecure children, seniors and adults in 16 Kansas counties.

Harvesters supports HB 2091 because a refundable food sales tax credit would help the most vulnerable Kansans meet their basic needs.

Food insecurity in Kansas following the onset of the COVID-19 public health and economic crisis is broad and deep. Prior to the pandemic, Kansas had a food insecurity rate of 12.7% (368,770 people). Since March, our agencies are reporting that the need is up 40%, and visits to Harvesters' "Get Help" webpage have increased nearly 250%. Kansas individuals and families facing unemployment, reduced hours and food costs that have increased an average of 3.9% since the pandemic began continue to need help putting food on the table.

A refundable food sales tax credit would provide targeted help to those low-income individuals and families who are the most economically fragile. And the reinstatement of refundability would be a significant benefit to elderly and disabled Kansans on fixed incomes who often don't have enough income to file a tax return. If the food sales tax refund was reinstated, many of them could again file returns and receive a refund, which could go a long way in helping them manage their ever-increasing household expenses.

We ask for your careful consideration and vote in support of this bill that will help Kansas children, families and seniors who are most in need.

Harvesters' mission is to feed hungry people today and work to end hunger tomorrow.

