

El Centro



SU CONEXIÓN A LA COMUNIDAD

To: The House Taxation Committee
From: Erica Andrade, Chief Program Officer, El Centro
Date: January 21, 2022
Re: HB 2484 and HB 2487- Support

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 2484 and HB 2487 to eliminate the food tax in Kansas.

El Centro supports both efforts on behalf of the most vulnerable residents in Wyandotte and Johnson counties. El Centro firmly believes in our mission, "*Strengthening communities and improving lives of Latinos and others through educational, social and economic opportunities.*" A significant part of meeting our mission is to address food insecurity and promote healthy eating with our families.

The residents we serve are mostly low-income working families that live on limited budgets. We know that families living with low wages spend a higher share of their income on groceries than many others. In Kansas, the lowest 20% of earners are spending over 20% of their household budgets on food. This means there is no room for savings and for some, the inability to buy enough food to sustain a healthy balanced diet for their children.

Kansas has the highest state food state tax than any of its neighboring states and we deserve a break! In addition to an annual saving of \$500 for the average family of four, eliminating the state food sales tax would also reduce food insecurity for many Kansans throughout the state.

Eliminating the food sales tax in Kansas would be felt immediately in the pocketbooks of our working families. Through our community education programs, El Centro works with families on planning weekly household meals on a budget to increase fresh fruits and vegetables in an affordable way. Our education program assist families to plan 5 meals for a family of 4 on \$20, however, most participants quickly notice they don't really have \$20 for food, but instead must make do with only \$18.70. We may think \$1.30 might not seem like a big deal to most, but for our families, living on tight budgets, working paycheck to paycheck, that can make the difference of having an extra dozen eggs or a few pounds of bananas.

In an effort to make the state of Kansas more responsive to our most vulnerable, we support HB 2484 and HB 2487. Thank you again for your consideration of this bill and the opportunity to testify on behalf of many Kansans. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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