

March 8, 2022

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Opposition to Senate Bill 501—Committee on Public Health and Welfare

Chairman Hilderbrand and members of the Committee:

This testimony is submitted on behalf of Marion County Food Bank in opposition to Senate Bill 501. We serve over 200 food insecure households in Marion County via our food pantry every month. Neighbors needing help with food can come twice a month. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 501.

I am a lifelong Kansan. I have been involved with our food pantry for the past seven years. In that time, I have seen the number of households needing food assistance increase. I am a member of the Marion Advancement Campaign. We began talks with the Kansas Food Bank in 2014 to become a partner agency. Since that time, we have expanded our services and built a new facility to meet the overwhelming need in our county and to expand the amount of fresh, healthy food items that we rely on from the Kansas Food Bank. We are totally staffed by volunteers that spend over 300 hours a year ensuring the food needs of our neighbors experiencing food insecurity are met.

The neighbors we serve are trying, they simply just need an additional hand up to make ends meet. They are hardworking, low wage earners. They are seniors living on fixed incomes. They are single parents. They have been affected by the COVID pandemic with job loss. They need us to help them put missing meals on their tables.

I ask for your thoughtful consideration and vote in opposition to this bill that will cost Kansas taxpayers tens of millions of dollars, increase food insecurity among working poor Kansas families and put additional pressures on community food pantries trying to help their neighbors. This bill will overburden food pantries such as ours. The bill can only do damage.

Don't let a Florida organization ruin our great state.

Respectfully,

Gene Winkler  
Marion County Food Bank / Marion Advancement Campaign.