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Nancy Bansemer
Project Hope
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Opposition to Senate Bill 501—Committee on Public Health and Welfare

Chairman Hilderbrand and members of the Committee:

I am a retired Registered Nurse and have volunteered at Project Hope for 5 years. Project Hope is the “food bank” for Stevens County. We are funded totally on donations and staffed by volunteers. I have been in charge of ordering and stocking all food and hygiene items for our facility. Project Hope is open two mornings a week. In 2019 Project Hope offered assistance to an average of 56 families a month. Our numbers have doubled with an average of 107 families each month for 2021. If the last four months of 2021 (average of 149 families/month) are an indication of the rising food insecurity of our county we will be in dire need of all of the assistance from the Kansas Food Bank and other resources that are possible. These skyrocketing numbers indicate the increasing struggles Kansas families have putting food on the table. In the last few months the prices of groceries and utilities have also skyrocketed making it harder for not only families, but also for Project Hope to obtain many of the items we provide for our families.

I have had to buy a large percentage of our meats and other foods across the counter at area grocery stores. We pay the same price as anybody else. Our costs have increased greatly the past year.

If the SB501 is passed it will increase the numbers of families with food insecurity and will also decrease the amount of food resources available for the Kansas Food Bank to supply to Kansan’s in need. More food items will need to be purchased at full cost by area food banks such as Project Hope.

I also would like to address the section related to families or individuals being required to have all of the paper work changed and submitted within 10 days of a life change. I have a son who is mentally disabled and is totally incapable of completing paper work. He lives in another community with the support of the local Mental Health facility. He has a case manager who is stretched very thin among many clients. They have tried the last two months to obtain food assistance for our son. It is next to impossible to coordinate schedules to get the forms filled out with the proper state employees. There are not enough social workers and case managers available to help all families complete more paper work every time something changes in their lives. Whoever wrote SB501 needs to work in the trenches and find out how life is for those less fortunate.

Please vote NO on SB501. It will make thousands of Kansans’ have much greater difficulty feeding their family and to receive medical care. It will cost the state an enormous amount in wages for staff to traverse the increased paperwork nightmare. Food Banks will have increased difficulty supplying food and necessities to those in need. Why let a Floridian come up with laws that will harm thousands of hard working Kansas citizens?

Sincerely,
Nancy Bansemer
Hugoton, KS