

February 17, 2016

Amanda Gress, Director of Government Relations  
Kansas Action for Children  
Testimony on House Bill 2595  
House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee

Chairman Hutton and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our opposition to House Bill 2595. Kansas Action for Children is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to shaping health, education and economic policy that improves the lives of Kansas children and families. As part of KAC's efforts to ensure all Kansas children grow up healthy, we support policies that can improve the health of children and their families.

**Poor nutrition and its related effects are a serious health concern for Kansas children.** 30% of Kansas children, ages 10 to 17, are considered overweight or obese. This can lead to significant health problems later on in life, including diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease. These negative health effects can continue into a child's adult years; children who are overweight are more likely to be overweight as adults. Kansas can do better to ensure its children grow up healthy.

**KAC encourages Kansas policymakers to allow local government the ability to innovate and explore options to encourage healthy eating.** Reinforcing healthy eating habits means that Kansas children are less likely to grow up overweight or obese, and more likely to be healthy as adults. HB 2595 removes local governments' ability to address health disparities linked to food and food access, preventing local government from addressing some of the most pressing health concerns in Kansas today. Kansas instead has the opportunity to support local initiatives like food policy councils, community gardens, and urban agriculture zoning to support the wider availability of healthy food across Kansas communities.

Kansas should ensure that local governments can promote the health and well-being of all Kansas children. We respectfully request that committee members oppose HB 2595.

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