

**Negative Written Testimony on HB 2140
To Increase Age Range of Able-Bodied Adult Work Requirements to Receive SNAP**

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Background and Summary:

I have been studying the implications of access to the social safety net for children and adults since 2016. This past year, I published two papers on the association between receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits and child abuse, neglect and foster care placements (Ginther and Johnson-Motoyama 2022; Johnson-Motoyama et al 2022). I currently have a working paper on the relationship between restrictions on access to SNAP and the receipt of SNAP benefits for the elderly and disabled (Easterday and Ginther 2022). This testimony provides a brief summary of research findings and describes the implications of HB2140.

This testimony is **Negative** on House Bill 2140 because it is currently at odds with federal law and will not lead to economic self-sufficiency for able-bodied adults without children.

As currently written, able-bodied adults without children (ABAWDs) who are ages 18-49 are entitled to three months of SNAP benefits every three years unless they are working or in a work or training program at least 20 hours a week.¹ HB2140 is in violation of federal guidance on ABAWD policies and may pose legal difficulties for the state. In addition, Congress has suspended the three-month time limit for ABAWDs during the COVID-19 pandemic and until the public health emergency ends. Several states have requested waivers to ABAWD requirements in order to provide SNAP benefits to ABAWDs that waive work requirements.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) SNAP Program Access Index,² Kansas ranks 48 of 50 states in providing access to SNAP benefits. Research in Ginther and Easterday (2022) shows that states like Kansas that impose additional restrictions on access to SNAP experience a 3% reduction in access to SNAP benefits and 2% reduction for people with disabilities in receiving SNAP benefits. USDA's policies are designed to make access to SNAP benefits easier for older adults and people with disabilities. Thus, any restrictions on access to SNAP endanger vulnerable populations. Furthermore, Johnson-Motoyama et al (2022) demonstrates that increased access to SNAP results in reductions of child abuse, neglect and foster care placements.

Research on work requirements and ABAWDs show much more dramatic effects. Brantley, Pillai, and Ku (2020) found that ABAWD work requirements were associated with a 21.2% reduction in SNAP participation and associated with increases in food insecurity. Gray et al

¹ <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/able-bodied-adults-without-dependents-abawds>.

² <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/program-access-index>

(2023) examined the effect of work requirements in Virginia on SNAP benefit receipt and employment outcomes. They found that work requirements reduced SNAP participation by 64% and those losing benefits did not increase their employment. If self-sufficiency is the goal of HB2140, the policy will most likely not work.

Given the negative impact that restrictions on SNAP have for families and individuals, I recommend that HB2140 not come to the Kansas House floor for a vote.

References:

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