

*Mildred Store*  
*Home of the Famous Charlie Brown Sandwich*

February 14, 2019

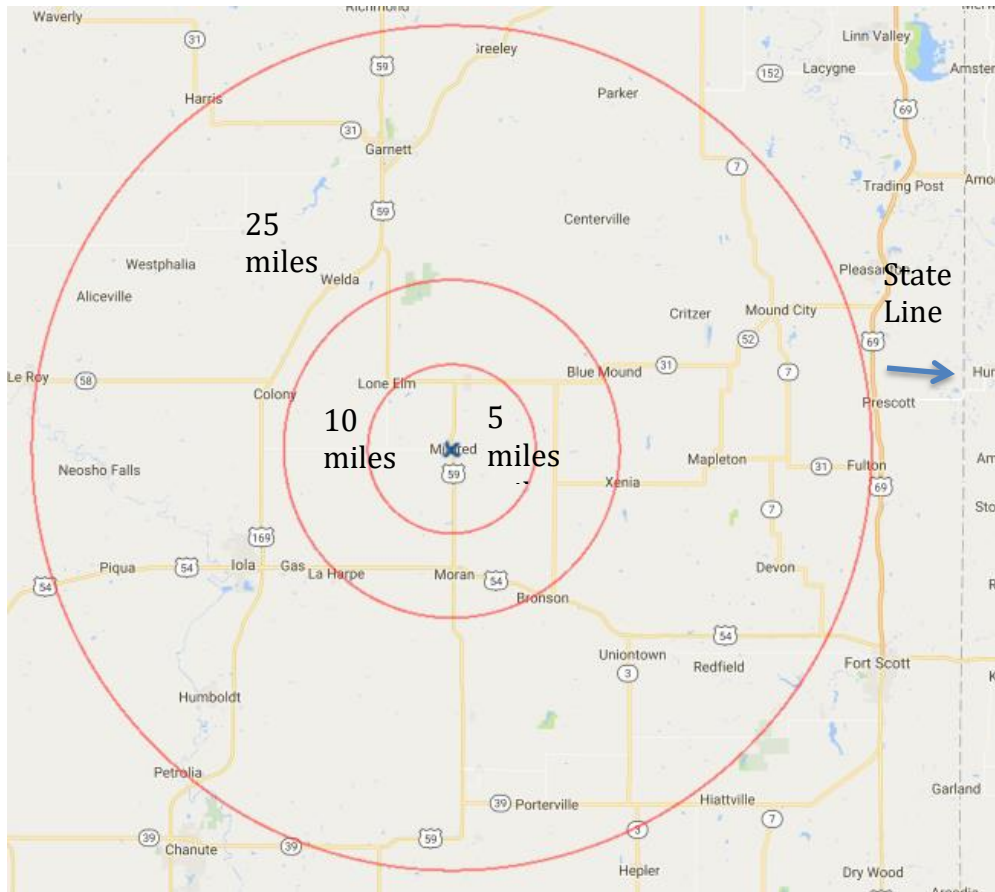
Regena Lance  
Owner  
Mildred Store  
86 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Moran, KS 66755  
House Bill 2261 - House Taxation Committee

Dear Chairman Johnson and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 76. Mildred Store is a rural grocery store in a town with a current population of less than 30 people, which focuses on providing low cost healthy foods to surrounding communities.

As a rural grocery store owner, community member and daughter of parents on a fixed income, I see customers coming into our store struggling to buy healthy foods and general groceries on a daily basis. In our area every penny counts and we must ensure that we are getting the most for our money. In our community we serve customers of all ages, from young families to the elderly. In order to serve these customers best we must remain competitive, keep our costs low and provide as many services as possible. We want our customers and their money to remain local and support our local economy.

According to studies conducted within a 10 mile ring of our store (2017) roughly \$4000.00 dollars a year was spent on food prepared at home. With the current Kansas tax rate customers will spend an additional \$310 just in taxes on their food. Many of our customers would choose healthier food options if they had the money, which an additional \$300 in their pockets would allow. Of the 986 households in a 10 mile radius of the Mildred Store our youngest and oldest families are making less than \$30,000 per year (most on a fixed income). These families on average are spending \$300 per month on groceries. If they buy them at the Mildred Store (or another Kansas grocer) they will lose roughly \$20 in taxes or they can drive less than 60 miles to Nevada, MO and pay less than \$4 in taxes. With these statistics in mind, is it any wonder many small communities are losing revenue and losing the local grocery store. Fort Scott, KS is a prime example of a town with a nice new grocery store, but lost revenue due to the proximity of the Missouri border and now the new grocery store is closed in less than 2 years' time.



I live in a rural area of Southeast Kansas where we consider ourselves to be in the breadbasket. Why should the bread cost more in one of the leading states in the production of wheat and less in the neighboring states? I have been a teacher for many years and I always go with the philosophy that even though life may not be fair we need to give the perception that it is. When you see the tax rates on foods in just our neighboring states Kansas can't even give the perception of fair at this time.

Lowering the tax rate on food would allow our Kansas families to have more money in their pockets to purchase not only more food but hopefully healthier foods and increase the Kansas economy by keeping the money in Kansas. Senate Bill 76 would help lessen the burden on the families that fall into the lowest income groups. These families in our areas are the ones who have the highest nutritional needs, the young families and elderly. For these reasons, we ask the committee to support Senate Bill 76.

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at the number listed below.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to share my concerns.

Sincerely,

Regena Lance

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