



TESTIMONY OF HALEY KOTTLER  
CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR  
KANSAS APPLESEED CENTER FOR LAW AND JUSTICE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND SENIORS  
**IN SUPPORT OF HB 2525**  
January 31, 2022

Members of the House Committee on Children and Seniors:

My name is Haley Kottler; I am a Campaign Director for Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to the belief that Kansans, working together, can build a state full of thriving, inclusive, and just communities.

**Kansas Appleseed supports HB 2525.** This bill would end the requirement of cooperation with child support from eligibility requirements for food and child care assistance, and exempt adults enrolled in school from the 20-hour-per-week work requirement for child care assistance.

There is no evidence conditioning food assistance on child support cooperation results in more child support payments.<sup>1</sup> Conditioning benefits like SNAP and Child Care Assistance on child support cooperation actually just makes things harder for low-income parents trying to provide food and childcare for their children.<sup>2</sup> These requirements are counterproductive when parents are cut off from the stabilizing supports that would otherwise allow them to have better access to better paying jobs necessary for fulfilling child support obligations.

The current law establishes that, just by applying for food assistance or child care assistance, you are deemed to have assigned away any present or future collection rights to child support to the state, including support owed to you or “any other family member for whom the applicant is applying for or receiving aid.”<sup>3</sup> This is important because it means that the entire family is subject to a harmful decrease in SNAP benefits if they fail to comply with child support.

More than 37% of children with a non custodial parent live in poverty.<sup>4</sup> SNAP benefits are an essential part of increasing a family’s overall budget. Reducing this budget puts children at increased risk of food insecurity and inadequate nutrition, and at greater risk of suffering long term consequences to their

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<sup>1</sup> Llobrera, J. “Child Support Cooperation Requirements in SNAP are Unproven, Costly, and Put Families at Risk.” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. 2020. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/child-support-cooperation-requirements-in-snap-are-unproven-costly-and-put>

<sup>2</sup> Cancian, M. “Reforming Policy for Single- Parent Families to Reduce Child Poverty.” RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences. 2018. <https://www.rsfjournal.org/content/rsfjss/4/2/91.full.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> K.S.A. 39-709 (k)

<sup>4</sup> Grall, T. “Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support” U.S. Census Bureau. 2018.



educational achievement and health.<sup>5</sup> Research demonstrates that greater access to SNAP results in reduction in hunger, improved dietary intake, reduced obesity, improved academic performance, improved mental health, improved economic self-sufficiency, improved local economies, improved job growth, and reduction of poverty.<sup>6</sup>

Tying safety-net support eligibility to child support compliance supports neither the parent nor the child. Both are harmed by this policy. HB 2525 seeks to fix this problem. For this reason, Kansas Appleseed urges your support of HB 2525.

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<sup>5</sup> Llobrera, J. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Grafton, H. "The Role of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Improving Health and Well-Being." Food Research & Action Center. 2017.

<https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/hunger-health-role-snap-improving-health-well-being.pdf>