



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2525

January 31, 2022

Chair Concannon and Members of the House Children and Seniors Committee:

The Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP) represents more than 450 pediatricians in Kansas. The KAAP has the fundamental goal that all children and adolescents in Kansas have the opportunity to grow safe and strong. It is with this goal in mind that we want to share our support for **HB 2525** removing non-cooperation with child support from requirements for food and childcare assistance eligibility and exempting adults enrolled in school from the 20-hour-per-week work requirement for child care assistance eligibility for a limited time.

Nearly 1 in 5 Kansas children are living in households without reliable access to healthy food. Experiencing food insecurity is detrimental to their development and overall well-being, with potential long term negative effects on health. As a pediatric hospitalist who regularly screens for food insecurity, I have had many tough conversations with parents who are working hard but still struggling to make ends meet. All too often, they are forced to sacrifice the quantity or nutritional quality of the food in their household in order to pay for other expenses like housing or childcare.

While there are many philanthropic organizations doing great work to combat food insecurity, the first and most reliable line of defense against child food insecurity is federal nutrition programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Programs that alleviate strain from families' budgets in other ways, such as childcare assistance, can also have a significant impact. Pediatricians recognize that reducing barriers to accessing these programs is an important step towards our goal of ensuring that every child is given an equitable opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration in supporting HB 2525 that will help meet the needs of our most vulnerable Kansas children.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "molly krager".

Molly Krager, MD
Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Public Policy Committee