



TESTIMONY OF ALLEN COUNTY MULTI-AGENCY TEAM
ALLEN COUNTY COALITION

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS AND JUVENILE JUSTICE
IN SUPPORT OF HB2215
JANUARY 22, 2022

Chairman Owens and members of the committee,

My name is Carol Olson; I am the Chair of the Allen County Multi-Agency Team (ACMAT) coalition. ACMAT's mission is to encourage agencies to collaborate for a healthier community. We focus efforts on youth drug and alcohol prevention, creating safe community events to educate our community members and help serve those that may need assistance. Our coalition works closely with youth and families, and we see the effect of not having food. We believe that food is a basic need for all.

We ask that you support the HB2215 that would allow people in Kansas with more than one felony drug conviction to receive food assistance. Allen County reports a much higher rate of children in poverty, 24%, compared to the state average of 14%, according to the annual County Health Rankings provided by Kansas Health Institute. We know on a local level how much food assistance impacts our community. People who have felony convictions have done their time and paid their dues. They are trying to support their families. Drug felony bans on food access keeps people in poverty. States with drug felony bans on food assistance have double the poverty rates as states without bans. Families are trying to recover and improve their lives. "We know how many people would benefit from these changes. I also believe when we live in the breadbasket of the world and are the 6th leading producer of beef in the US. There is absolutely no reason that there should ever be any hungry people or families in our state or community," said Michelle Meiwes, ACMAT Board Member. Ultimately, food insecurity is a political decision. I hope you all will join us in ensuring no Kansan goes hungry.



ABOUT ACMAT: The coalition consists of individuals and organizations that share information. ACMAT maintains a focus on creating a safe and healthy community for all Allen County families and children by organizing and leading the way on several community events such as a Family Safety Night and numerous safety events. ACMAT has been an important partner in other community initiatives such as a Poverty Simulation, Bucks for Buckles (seat belt safety), smoking cessation programs, and opioid collaborative. For the past seven years ACMAT has been more involved in youth substance abuse prevention and leads strategies by becoming one of the lead agencies (along with law enforcement) in an annual National Drug Take Back Day, establishing medication disposal drop boxes in Iola, Moran, and Humboldt, and by organizing and leading a Sticker Shock campaign to reduce the number of adults purchasing for minors.

Thank you for your service,

ACMAT Coalition

Carol Olson, Chair

Matt Stuckey, Vice-Chair

Kristin Wright, Treasurer

Vickie Moss, Secretary

Michelle Meiwes, Member

Robin Loman, Member

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