

January 22, 2019

**Testimony on Senate Bill 4 (Sater)  
Senate Committee on Seniors, Families and Children**

KC Healthy Kids is a non profit agency serving metro Kansas City. We rally the people in our communities to improve access to affordable fresh food and safe places to walk and play.

We are deeply concerned that Senate Bill 4 will hurt children, families and communities.

**Hunger blocks student success**, limiting future opportunities for children in low income families. According to Feeding America, the country's largest network of food pantries, about 241,830 Missouri children experienced food insecurity in 2016, placing them at risk of hunger. SNAP helps ensure that the academic success of these children is not limited by their family's income. SB 4 would change that; it would disqualify an entire household from receiving SNAP benefits on the basis of one family member's status. This will increase food insecurity and hunger among children, undermining their chances at success in school and later in life.

**SB 4 discourages family stability** by withholding benefits from entire households when one member fails to comply (lines 18-23), and by restoring benefits to family members if the head of household changes (lines 23-25). A direct assault on the most basic safety net in any person's life, their family unit, is not only unethical, it will inevitably make it more difficult for workers to get through difficult times and find long term success. It is a shockingly shortsighted and harmful provision which undermines families as well as the overarching goal of worker success.

**Flooding, tornadoes and other emergencies require a flexible response.** Currently, Missouri has the ability to respond sensibly when natural disasters or economic crisis occur that make it impossible for willing workers to comply with work requirements. SB 4 eliminates the state's ability to waive work requirements in such circumstances, blocking help when people most need it. SB 4 would prevent the state from responding sensibly to crisis, allowing economic damage to ripple through already struggling communities.

**Losing SNAP will hurt Missouri's economy.** It hurts grocers when customers get into line at food pantries rather than the checkout line. The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities reports that SNAP pumped \$1.2 billion into Missouri's economy in 2016. A fiscal note is not currently available for this bill, but must include the estimated impact on state revenue of lost sales. The fiscal note for an identical proposal in 2018, HB 561, estimated that 70% of SNAP households would not comply with the proposed work requirements. A loss in buying power on this scale would be devastating to grocers, an industry in which narrow profit margins of 1% to 1.3% are standard. Store closures seem likely to result- bad news for those workers and the broader economy.

Senate Bill 4 will damage the ability of individuals, families and communities to weather difficulties, blocking their opportunities for long term success. We respectfully urge the committee to oppose SB 4.

Sincerely,



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