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**Submitted by: Mary Fund, Executive Director, Kansas Rural Center**  
**Testimony in opposition of House Bill 2595**

Chairman Hutton and members of the Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns about House Bill 2595. Since 1979, the Kansas Rural Center (KRC) has worked as a statewide organization to promote the long-term health of the land and it's people through education, research, and advocacy for farmers, ranchers, communities, and others engaged in strengthening our states farm, food and health systems.

KRC has spent the past two years traveling the state and getting input from hundreds of Kansans who are concerned about healthy food access in their communities. It is load and clear that each community is unique and needs to be able to address food, nutrition, and access differently for the wellbeing of their populations. This bill is an over reach of state government into local government entities and local control.

We respectfully request that the committee oppose HB 2595 for the following reasons.

- This bill will halt existing growth and momentums of food policy councils and other local initiatives that support increased access to healthy food and local food systems across Kansas communities
- Efforts to expand local food systems including farmers markets, community gardens, hoop house production, or other community efforts that support the growth of farm to consumer food access are all at risk of mired growth and economic vitality with this bill.
- This bill would take away a community's ability to adequately and appropriately address food based health disparities and solutions tailored to their needs.
- This bill would obstruct youth services such as schools, parks and rec and other political subdivisions within local governments from activating food and beverage procurement policies that address the unique needs and disparities of the youth populations they serve.

Kansas ranks 13<sup>th</sup> in the nation for adult obesity, with an obesity rate of 31.3%. 30% of Kansas children age 10-17 are considered overweight or obese. Yet many of the local initiatives and entities mentioned above are gaining positive momentum in addressing this issue across Kansas. This bill would negatively affect this momentum. This also comes at a time when many grocery stores, especially those located in rural communities, are closing their doors. It is critical that local governments have the ability to address these loses in ways that replenish while taking care of the health of their populations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.