

February 10, 2016

The Honorable Mark Hutton
Chair, Committee on Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development
Kansas House of Representatives
300 SW 10th Street, Room 286-N
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Chairman Hutton:

I am writing to you on behalf of those who are uninsured and underserved in the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City's service area, which includes Allen, Johnson and Wyandotte Counties in Kansas. The Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City (HCF) seeks to eliminate barriers to health for the uninsured. Obesity is an important barrier to health, with crosscutting implications on cardiovascular health, diabetes, some cancers and musculoskeletal disorders. Reducing overweight/obesity will reduce the disease burden in Kansas, creating a healthier and more productive workforce and reducing health care costs associated with these diseases.

In Kansas, 30% of children between the ages of 10 and 17 are considered overweight or obese. Reducing the toll of obesity on young people requires the creation of environments that offer people a range of food choices and the information they need to make healthy choices. This isn't about restricting people's choices, but offering them an abundance of information and options that will make it easier for them to choose healthy foods. In our ten years of grantmaking, we have provided countless grants to local organizations that support healthy eating. We are endlessly impressed by the ability of local entities to develop local solutions to local problems.

HB 2595 threatens to stymie these local efforts and impose a one-size-fits-all approach that doesn't accommodate the unique needs of Kansas communities. The Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City encourages you and your colleagues to oppose HB 2595 and allow local communities to continue their important work of reducing the disease burden of obesity.

Sincerely,

Bridget McCandless, MD
President/CEO
Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City

