



February 15, 2016

Eileen Horn
Chair, LiveWell Lawrence Coalition
HB 2595, Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee

Chairman Hutton and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns about House Bill 2595. LiveWell Lawrence is a Douglas County-based coalition of almost 150 community members committed to healthy eating, active living, and eliminating tobacco use in Douglas County and in the state of Kansas.

Ensuring healthy food environments is an important public policy priority. Few adults or children in the state of Kansas eat recommended servings of fruits and vegetables, and nearly one in three adults and one in three kids are considered overweight or obese, in part as a result of unhealthy diets.

HB 2595, as written, will significantly curtail current growth in food policy councils around the state and will thwart other local initiatives that support increased access to healthy food in Kansas communities.

As an example, in Lawrence, citizens buying from Parks and Recreation concession stands now have healthier options as a result of collaborative work between Lawrence Parks and Recreation, HyVee Grocery (their concessions vendor), the local health department, and K-State Research and Extension, facilitated by the LiveWell Lawrence Coalition. Now over half of the items served in their concessions stands meet nutrition standards modeled after respected national programs. Since concession stands began offering these options in the fall of 2015, healthy menu items have been some of the best sellers!

Local authorities need support to develop effective solutions to address the most pressing public health concerns in Kansas today, including diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and other chronic diseases associated with obesity and poor nutrition. If this legislation were to become law, it could negate the capacity that exists in our local communities to develop evidence-based strategies to address these issues.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the committee oppose HB 2595.