



DCF Legislative Testimony

February 11, 2025

TESTIMONY OF: Dr. Carla Whiteside-Hicks, Director of Economic and Employment Services
Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON: SB 161 - Requiring legislative approval prior to any state agency seeking or implementing a public assistance program waiver or other authorization from the federal government that expands eligibility for any public assistance program or increases cost to the state.

DCF | SB 161 | Legislative Authorization for Public Assistance Waivers

Chair Erickson and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on of Senate Bill 161 - Requiring legislative approval prior to any state agency seeking or implementing a public assistance program waiver or other authorization from the federal government that expands eligibility for any public assistance program or increases cost to the state.

K.S.A. 39-709 includes several public assistance programs administered by the Department for Children and Families (DCF) which would be subject to SB 161. These include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance, food assistance and child care subsidy. This statute includes a prohibition for requesting or implementing a waiver of program for the time limited assistance provisions for able-bodied adults without dependents under the food assistance program.

Currently, all TANF and food assistance benefits paid to eligible families are 100% federal funds. Child care subsidy payments include state funds to meet matching and maintenance of effort requirements. State funds are required to administer the food assistance program.

SB 161 would have no immediate impact on expenditures or revenues related to these programs as it includes a provision indicating no effect on any state plan amendment or waiver program already implemented as of July 1, 2025. However, at minimum, future state plan amendments, new programs, and waiver continuation requests could be negatively impacted by SB 161.

The requirement to seek legislative approval prior to amending and submitting state plans, and prior to implementing new federally funded programs could result in delays in funding or an inability to accept new federal funding. State plans, and their corresponding amendments, new federal regulations which may require a waiver, and new program opportunities typically do not correspond to Kansas legislative calendar.

Additionally, the Legislature already approves additional spending through the appropriations process. Program changes that require additional funding are represented in agency budget requests or in the caseload process for entitlement programs.

DCF is opposed to this legislation as written and would ask that the committee vote no. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 161.