

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Resolution HHS-19-26

A RESOLUTION ON INCREASING ACCESS TO FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES BY ENHANCING THE BENEFITS OF SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) RECIPIENTS AND CREATING INCENTIVES

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) recognizes that our constituents face a growing burden of largely preventable chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, stroke, obesity, and diabetes;

WHEREAS, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the largest anti-hunger program in the United States, provides critical food assistance to nearly 41 million low-income Americans;

WHEREAS, African-Americans are disproportionately affected by food insecurity;

WHEREAS, the food insecurity rate among African-American, non-Hispanic households is more than double that of White, non-Hispanic households;

WHEREAS, SNAP helps households improve food security, reducing the number of people who skip meals because they don't have the money or resources to buy enough food;

WHEREAS, a Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis using the government's Supplemental Poverty Measure (which counts SNAP as income) and correcting for underreporting in government surveys found that SNAP kept 8.4 million people out of poverty in 2015, including 3.8 million children;

WHEREAS, SNAP plays an important role in boosting the economy of low-income communities, with every \$5 in new SNAP benefits generating \$9 for the local economy. Additionally, an increase of \$1 billion in SNAP expenditures is estimated to increase economic activity (GDP) by \$1.79 billion;

WHEREAS, one study has concluded that more than 40 million Americans who rely on a government nutrition program face risks for major health problems because the program lacks nutrition standards;

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WHEREAS, the Food, Nutrition, and Conservation Act of 2008 authorized the Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) was designed to test the impact of incentivizing fruit and vegetable purchases among a small group of SNAP recipients;

WHEREAS, according to a HIP study, households participating in Healthy Incentives Projects reported spending \$78.17 each month on all fruits and vegetables, \$6.15 more than households that did not participate in the program;

WHEREAS, two-thirds of HIP households said they bought larger amounts and a greater variety of fruits and vegetables because of the HIP. Additionally, these households ate more fruits and vegetables; and

WHEREAS, SNAP recipients who were given incentives to buy more fruits and vegetables ate almost a quarter of a cup more of fruits and vegetables per day.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) recognizes the importance of SNAP in increasing access to healthy food in vulnerable communities;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL urges the program to offer incentives for purchasing fruits and vegetables and create evaluations to assess elements such as the impact on consumer purchasing, availability, stigma and retailer implementation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL recommends supporting state and local policies that create enhanced SNAP education and fund or expand SNAP incentive programs;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL urges states and communities to pass policies that increase targeted projects for SNAP authorized-retailer incentive programs for SNAP benefits when used on fruits and vegetables; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, U.S. Department of Agriculture and other federal and state government officials, as appropriate.

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SPONSOR: Representative Toni Rose (TX)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Health and Human Services Policy Committee

**Certified by Committee Chair(s): Representative John King (SC) and
Representative Toni Rose (TX)**

Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is November 30, 2018

Ratification is certified by: Representative Gregory W. Porter (IN), President