ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 111

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 7, 2022

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT
District 31 (Hudson)

SYNOPSIS
Urges US Congress to allow Secretary of Agriculture to implement Pandemic-Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.
AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION urging United States Congress to
allow the Secretary of Agriculture to implement Pandemic-
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

WHEREAS, Currently, 42 million individuals in the United States
participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
(SNAP), which provides unemployed, homeless, elderly or disabled
persons, persons receiving welfare or public assistance, and
individuals working for low wages with a supplemental income to
purchase nutritious foods; and

WHEREAS, Crises, such as global disease pandemics, can further
exacerbate already present financial struggles and create financial
struggles among persons who were previously financially-stable;

WHEREAS, Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, is a respiratory
illness that was first identified during an outbreak in Wuhan, China
and has since expanded across various continents including Asia,
Europe, North America, South America, Africa, and Australia; and

WHEREAS, There have been thousands of cases of COVID-19
confirmed worldwide with cases in the United States and New
Jersey, and the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 is
expected to rise into the future; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 outbreak has caused states, businesses, and
schools to participate in “social distancing” steps to prevent the
further spread of the disease; these business and school closures
leave hourly workers without income and leave millions of low-
income children at risk of missing meals provided by schools; and

WHEREAS, The current SNAP can be expanded to become the
Pandemic-Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (P-SNAP),
which was authorized during the 2009 outbreak of H1N1 more
commonly referred to as the Swine Flu, in order to effectively
address the additional need for nutritional services during the
COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, P-SNAP would allow for families and individuals who are
unable to work or attend school, as a result of the COVID-19
outbreak, to quickly receive much needed benefits to purchase
nutritional foods; and

WHEREAS, P-SNAP would expand SNAP eligibility to certain
families and individuals affected by COVID-19 who would not
have previously been eligible to receive assistance under the
ordinary SNAP requirements while also increasing monetary aid for
previous SNAP users; and

WHEREAS, P-SNAP would also operate under reduced contact with
clients by encouraging mail, telephone, and online applications, the
use of telephone interviews instead of in-person interviews, and the
delivery of Electronic Benefits Transfer Cards by mail, which
would avoid the further spread of COVID-19 while increasing
access to P-SNAP services; and
WHEREAS, Implementing P-SNAP would provide essential financial aid to struggling individuals and families, ensure these individuals and families can remain well-fed during the pandemic, and ease nervousness and panic among individuals and families who fear COVID-19 will impact their ability to eat or provide food for their families; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. This House urges the United States Congress to allow the Secretary of Agriculture to implement P-SNAP.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of the New Jersey congressional delegation, and the United States Secretary of Agriculture.

STATEMENT

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the United States’ largest anti-hunger program, is relied upon by over 42 million people. SNAP provides eligible individuals and families with supplemental income to purchase nutritious food. During crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, financial struggles among SNAP participants are exacerbated and new financial struggles arise among individuals and families who were financially stable prior to the pandemic. COVID-19 has caused many business and schools to close, which has directly affected students who received meals provided by their schools and hourly workers who have been forced to stay home from work without income.

For these reasons, the Pandemic-Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (P-SNAP) should be implemented. P-SNAP will expand eligibility to receive SNAP benefits to people who would not have met the previous the requirements for SNAP, and it will also provide additional monetary aid to SNAP users who were additionally impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. P-SNAP will allow for families and individuals impacted by the Coronavirus to continue to purchase and consume nutritious meals. P-SNAP will also increase application and interviewing flexibility among potential new clients and restrict face-to-face contact within the application process in an effort to prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

The United States Congress should allow the Secretary of
Agriculture to implement P-SNAP to ensure low-income, struggling individuals and families can receive the assistance they need during the COVID-19 pandemic.