

**SENATE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION No. 137**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED JANUARY 19, 2023

Sponsored by:
Senator ANTHONY M. BUCCO
District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS

Urges USDA to revise 20 hour weekly work requirement for student participation in SNAP.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** urging the U.S. Department of
2 Agriculture to revise the 20 hour weekly work requirement
3 required for student participation in the federal Supplemental
4 Nutrition Assistance Program.
5
6 **WHEREAS**, The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
7 is a nutritional assistance initiative administered at the state level by
8 the federal U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); and
9 **WHEREAS**, SNAP is the nation's largest domestic food and nutrition
10 assistance program for low-income Americans. In order to receive
11 SNAP benefits, a person must qualify based on their income,
12 expenses, and assets. A person with a lower income receives higher
13 benefits up to a specified maximum; and
14 **WHEREAS**, Although SNAP eligibility rules apply to any eligible
15 person, students attending an institution of higher education more
16 than half-time, determined by the institution the student attends, are
17 not eligible for SNAP unless they meet one or more exemptions;
18 and
19 **WHEREAS**, Student exemptions include, but are limited to, the
20 following, the student is: under the age 18 or 50 of age or older;
21 intellectually or developmentally disabled; working at least 20
22 hours a week in paid employment; participating in certain work
23 study or on the job training programs; or unable to access child care
24 which prevents the student from participating in the workforce or a
25 work study program; and
26 **WHEREAS**, College students experience food insecurity in every state
27 of the country. A report from the U.S. Government Accountability
28 Office found that nearly half of the students who would be eligible
29 for SNAP do not receive the assistance; and
30 **WHEREAS**, The report also found that there are many barriers students
31 face in accessing SNAP benefits, including the program's
32 complicated eligibility criteria, which leave students unable to
33 figure out if they qualify and prevent them from applying for
34 benefits; and
35 **WHEREAS**, Before the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)
36 pandemic, nearly 40 percent of students reported being food
37 insecure to some extent. As a result of the pandemic, students who
38 were eligible for SNAP lost that eligibility as they lost their jobs or
39 work hours, preventing them from earn a living wage and to access
40 food for themselves and their families; and
41 **WHEREAS**, The federal "Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021,"
42 Pub.L.116-206 temporarily expanded SNAP eligibility for certain
43 students; specifically exempting students who are eligible to
44 participate in work study during the regular school year, without the
45 requirement that they actually participate in work study, and those
46 who have an expected family contribution of zero, as reported on a
47 student's Federal Student Aid Form; and

1 **WHEREAS**, Although the temporary exemptions will be in effect until
2 30 days after the federal government lifts the official designation of
3 the nationwide COVID-19 public health emergency, and states have
4 the authority to assist students enroll in SNAP through other
5 exemptions; a more permanent solution is necessary to allow
6 students to qualify for SNAP benefits; and

7 **WHEREAS**, Because SNAP was established pursuant to federal law,
8 and because the program is subject to compliance with certain
9 minimum federally-established work requirements and eligibility
10 criteria, the provisions of any State law which approves the change
11 in, and authorizes a waiver of, existing federal student work
12 requirements for SNAP benefits would not be permitted under
13 federal statutes or federal administrative rules; and

14 **WHEREAS**, It is both fitting and appropriate for this House to urge the
15 USDA to approve changes to, and the United States Congress to
16 enact legislation that authorizes state waivers for, the 20 hour
17 weekly student work requirement established by federal law at 7
18 CFR 273.5(b)(5) in order to expand the eligibility of students
19 attending institutions of higher education to participate in SNAP;
20 now, therefore,

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22 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Senate of the State of New Jersey (the
23 General Assembly concurring):

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25 1. The Legislature of this State respectfully urges the U.S.
26 Department of Agriculture to approve changes to, and the United
27 States Congress to enact legislation that authorizes state waivers
28 for, the 20 hour weekly student work requirement established by
29 federal law at 7 CFR 273.5(b)(5) in order to expand the eligibility
30 of students attending institutions of higher education to participate
31 in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

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33 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
34 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or the
35 Secretary of the Senate to the President and Vice-President of the
36 United States, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Majority and
37 Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, the Speaker and
38 Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, and
39 each member of the United States Congress elected from this State.

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STATEMENT

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44 This concurrent resolution respectfully urges the U.S.
45 Department of Agriculture to approve changes to, and the United
46 States Congress to enact legislation that authorizes state waivers
47 for, the 20 hour weekly student work requirement established by

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- 2 of students attending institutions of higher education to participate
- 3 in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.