

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 2359

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 23, 2022

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 2359 (1R).

As amended, this bill amends an existing law, section 1 of P.L.2021, c.243 (C.44:10-81.3), which requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish a streamlined New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application process for seniors, to instead require the application process be streamlined for all residents of New Jersey. The goal of streamlining the application process is to maximize the enrollment of eligible SNAP participants in New Jersey.

In streamlining the SNAP application process, the Commissioner of Human Services will be required to, at a minimum, update the online application system to ensure the system employs current technology and is user-friendly, with features that include, but are not limited to, easy account creation, easy access, and easy tracking of an applicant's application status.

As amended, the bill additionally requires the DHS to establish a call center where DHS employees or persons under contract with the DHS will be available, in real-time, to assist individuals in navigating the SNAP application process, checking on the status of an application, and troubleshooting any issues with the application.

The bill directs the commissioner to apply to the Food and Nutrition Service within the United States Department of Agriculture for any necessary waivers or approvals to implement the provisions of the bill.

As amended, the bill revises the rulemaking section of P.L.2021, c.243 to provide that the rules and regulations adopted by the DHS will apply both to P.L.2021, c.243 and to the provisions of this bill.

The bill appropriates \$750,000 from the General Fund to the DHS for the purposes of implementing the bill.

As reported by the committee with amendments, Assembly Bill No. 2359 (1R) is identical to Senate Bill No. 2034, which was also reported by the committee on this date with amendments.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments revise the bill to require the DHS to establish a permanent call center, rather than a two-year demonstration project. The amendments remove sections setting forth the expiration date for the call center and requiring the DHS to issue a report concerning its findings and recommendations with regard to the call center.

The committee amendments restore language, which was in the bill as introduced, authorizing the DHS to staff the call center with persons under contract with the DHS.

The committee amendments remove language from the section of the bill revising the rules and regulations section of P.L.2021, c.243 granting the DHS emergency rulemaking authority, and restore language directing that rules and regulations to implement that law and the current bill be adopted pursuant to the requirements of the “Administrative Procedure Act.”

The committee amendments make a technical change to the title of the bill to reflect that it is amending both the title and body of P.L.2021, c.243.