

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3035

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 20, 2023

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 3035.

This bill establishes the State SNAP Menstrual Hygiene Benefit Program in the Division of Family Development in the Department of Human Services, and makes an appropriation to support the program. SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, is a nutrition assistance program that serves as a safety net for low-income households. The federal government provides 100 percent of the funds for the standard SNAP benefit for all enrollees, and prohibits the use of benefits to purchase menstrual hygiene products. This bill, in using State funds to provide a menstrual hygiene product benefit, aims to circumvent the federal prohibition in order to help address “period poverty” in New Jersey. Period poverty, an invisible form of poverty that affects over 22 million people in the United States, is the inability to afford or access the necessary menstrual products needed to manage a period. Recent studies show that 2 in 5 people who menstruate experience period poverty.

Under the program, the division is to distribute to each menstruator in an eligible SNAP household a monthly State benefit of \$14. The division is required to distribute the monthly State benefit via the household’s existing SNAP electronic benefits card, on the same issuance date as the household’s standard SNAP benefits. A household is required to use any monthly State benefit issued pursuant to this bill for menstrual products. Any unspent funds from a household’s monthly State SNAP Menstrual Hygiene Benefit is to be carried over to the next month, for use by the household for the same purpose. The bill defines “menstrual hygiene products” to mean tampons, menstrual cups, or sanitary napkins used to collect or absorb menstrual fluids.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that this bill will increase annual State costs by \$2.0 million in order to provide menstrual hygiene benefits and diaper benefits to certain Work First New Jersey Program beneficiaries, as described under the bill.

The OLS assumes that the Department of Human Services will incur one-time expenses up to \$60,000 to make technological modifications to the State's existing electric benefits transfer (EBT) system to accommodate these new benefit programs.