

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 218

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 15, 2019

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman JOANN DOWNEY

District 11 (Monmouth)

Assemblyman NICHOLAS CHIARAVALLOTI

District 31 (Hudson)

Assemblyman ERIC HOUGHTALING

District 11 (Monmouth)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman Quijano

SYNOPSIS

Condemns ongoing federal government shutdown, and urges U.S. Congress and President to take immediate action to reopen government and provide funding for “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” and other similar programs.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/25/2019)

- 1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** condemning the current partial federal
2 government shutdown, and urging the Congress and President of
3 the United States to reopen government and fund the
4 “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” and other similar
5 programs.
6
- 7 **WHEREAS**, A partial shutdown of the federal government, affecting
8 nine federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture
9 (USDA), was commenced at midnight on the morning of Saturday,
10 December 22, 2018, and is presently ongoing; and
- 11 **WHEREAS**, The partial government shutdown is now ranked as the
12 longest shutdown in American history; and
- 13 **WHEREAS**, Although the U.S. Senate, on December 18, 2018,
14 unanimously passed, by voice vote, a continuing resolution that
15 would have provided the short-term funding necessary to prevent
16 the partial government shutdown, and although the incoming U.S.
17 House of Representatives, on January 3, 2018, passed a similar
18 short-term funding package, the President of the United States has
19 refused to sign these short-term funding bills, and has indicated that
20 he will be happy to continue the partial government shutdown for
21 months, or even years, unless and until Congress appropriates more
22 than \$5 billion to fund the construction of a physical wall along the
23 nation’s southern border; and
- 24 **WHEREAS**, Although the partial government shutdown negatively
25 affects all Americans, it particularly endangers the livelihoods of
26 the nation’s poorest and most vulnerable citizens; and
- 27 **WHEREAS**, Most significantly, because the USDA is affected by the
28 shutdown, millions of America’s poorest and most vulnerable
29 citizens may be left to go hungry as the shutdown drags on; and
- 30 **WHEREAS**, As a result of the partial government shutdown, 95 percent
31 of federal staff for the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Services has
32 been furloughed, federal funding is not available for food assistance
33 programs, including the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
34 Program for Women, Infants, and Children” (WIC), and the
35 “Commodity Supplemental Food Program,” and the nation’s child
36 nutrition assistance programs may cease to function when existing
37 federal funds for those programs are exhausted in February; and
- 38 **WHEREAS**, The USDA is also warning that it may have to severely cut
39 the nation’s largest, and most important, food assistance program,
40 known as the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program”
41 (SNAP), as a result of this partial government shutdown; and
- 42 **WHEREAS**, In September 2018 alone, the most recent month for which
43 USDA data is available, SNAP served more than 38.5 million
44 Americans (nearly 12 percent of the total U.S. population) at an
45 approximate cost \$4.7 million; and
- 46 **WHEREAS**, Although current Congressional appropriations are
47 sufficient to fund SNAP through January, commencing in February,

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1 the USDA will need to fund the program's operations by tapping
2 into a \$3 billion emergency fund, which is insufficient to cover
3 even two-thirds of the anticipated program costs for February; and
4 **WHEREAS**, Unless the government reopens before the end of January,
5 millions of Americans who live below the poverty line could be left
6 in the lurch, and have their access to food reduced by February and
7 eliminated by March; and
8 **WHEREAS**, With each passing day that the federal government remains
9 shut down, the livelihoods of the poorest Americans will be
10 endangered all the more, and the continuation of this shutdown
11 beyond January 2019 will ensure that these vulnerable citizens, who
12 already struggle to get by, will be forced to endure even greater
13 difficulties in satisfying their basic human needs; now, therefore,

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

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18 1. This House strongly urges the Congress and President of the
19 United States to take any and all actions necessary to ensure the
20 immediate reopening of the federal government and the allocation
21 of the federal funding that is needed to ensure the continued and
22 uninterrupted operations of the "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
23 Program," as well as all other food and nutrition assistance
24 programs that are operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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26 2. In the event that the President of the United States vetoes
27 legislation to reopen the federal government and provide funding
28 for the "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program" and other
29 food and nutrition assistance programs, this House strongly urges
30 the U.S. Congress to use its constitutional authority to immediately
31 override that veto, and thereby reopen the government and provide
32 the necessary funding for these essential programs.

33
34 3. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
35 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the
36 President of the United States, the majority and minority leaders of
37 the U.S. Senate, the majority and minority leaders of the U.S.
38 House of Representatives, the Commissioner of the U.S.
39 Department of Agriculture, and every member of Congress elected
40 from this State.

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STATEMENT

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45 This resolution would respectfully urge the Congress and President
46 of the United States to end the partial shutdown of the federal
47 government, which began at midnight on the morning of Saturday,

1 December 22, 2018, and is presently ongoing; and to ensure the
2 continuation of federal funding for the “Supplemental Nutrition
3 Assistance Program” (SNAP) and other food and nutrition assistance
4 programs operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

5 Although the U.S. Senate, on December 18, 2018, unanimously
6 passed, by voice vote, a continuing resolution that would have
7 provided the short-term funding necessary to prevent the partial
8 government shutdown, and although the incoming U.S. House of
9 Representatives, on January 3, 2018, passed a similar short-term
10 funding package, the President of the United States has, thus far,
11 refused to sign these short-term funding bills, and has indicated that he
12 will be happy to continue the partial government shutdown for months,
13 or even years, unless and until Congress appropriates more than \$5
14 billion to fund the construction of a physical wall along the nation’s
15 southern border.

16 The partial government shutdown is now ranked as the longest
17 shutdown in this American history. Although the shutdown negatively
18 affects all Americans, it particularly endangers the livelihoods of the
19 nation’s poorest and most vulnerable citizens. Most significantly,
20 because the USDA is affected by the shutdown, millions of these
21 citizens may be left to go hungry as the shutdown drags on.

22 As a result of the partial government shutdown, 95 percent of
23 federal staff for the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Services has been
24 furloughed, federal funding is not available for food assistance
25 programs, including the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
26 for Women, Infants, and Children” (WIC), and the “Commodity
27 Supplemental Food Program,” and the nation’s child nutrition
28 assistance programs may cease to function when existing federal funds
29 for those programs are exhausted in February. The USDA is also
30 warning that the shutdown may force it to severely cut the nation’s
31 largest, and most important, food assistance program, known as the
32 “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” (SNAP), which, in
33 September 2018 alone, served more than 38.5 million Americans at an
34 approximate cost \$4.7 million. Although current congressional
35 appropriations are sufficient to fund SNAP through January,
36 commencing in February, the USDA will need to fund the program’s
37 operations by tapping into a \$3 billion emergency fund, which is
38 insufficient to cover even two-thirds of the anticipated program costs
39 for February. Accordingly, unless the government reopens before the
40 end of January, millions of Americans who live below the poverty line
41 could be left in the lurch, and have their access to food reduced by
42 February and eliminated by March.

43 With each passing day that the federal government remains closed,
44 the livelihoods of the poorest Americans will be endangered all the
45 more, and the continuation of this shutdown beyond January 2019 will
46 ensure that these vulnerable citizens, who already struggle to get by,
47 will be forced to endure even greater difficulties in satisfying their

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1 basic human needs. It is, therefore, imperative that the Congress and
2 President of the United States take whatever action is necessary to
3 ensure the immediate reopening of the federal government and the
4 allocation of adequate federal funding for these essential food and
5 nutrition assistance programs. Moreover, if the President vetoes
6 congressionally passed legislation to reopen government and fund
7 these programs, as he has threatened to do, it is imperative that the
8 U.S. Congress use its constitutional authority to immediately override
9 that veto, and thereby ensure the reopening of government and the
10 funding of these essential programs, for the good of the country and its
11 poorest and most vulnerable citizens.