

ASSEMBLY HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4242

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: AUGUST 10, 2020

The Assembly Human Services Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4242.

As amended by the committee, this bill requires the Department of Human Services to engage in comprehensive outreach efforts to ensure that all noncitizens are made aware of how participation in the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) affects whether a noncitizen applying for admission or adjustment of status is inadmissible to the United States, pursuant to the federal “Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds” rule (84 FR 41292), also known as the “public charge rule.” The bill would require the department to work in consultation and cooperation with noncitizen advocacy organizations in performing this outreach.

The recent expansion to the federal “Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds” rule has casted uncertainty and confusion within the noncitizen community, as to whether participation in a noncash government benefits program such as SNAP affects whether a noncitizen applying for admission or adjustment of status is inadmissible to the United States. As a result, many noncitizen families are hesitant to apply to SNAP, even if those noncitizens are eligible for SNAP and exempt from the “public charge rule.” Noncitizens exempt from the “public charge rule” include refugees, asylees, Afghans and Iraqis with special immigrant visas, certain nonimmigrant trafficking and crime victims, individuals applying under the federal “Violence Against Women Act,” special immigrant juveniles, and those to whom the United States Department of Homeland Security has granted a waiver of public charge inadmissibility. In order to maximize participation in SNAP, this bill helps ensure that noncitizens are fully aware of how participation in the program may or may not affect inadmissibility into the United States, pursuant to 84 FR 41292.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to make a minor technical correction to insert a missing citation.