

ASSEMBLY HOMELAND SECURITY AND STATE
PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 165

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 16, 2020

The Assembly Homeland Security and State Preparedness Committee reports favorably Assembly Concurrent Resolution No.165.

As reported by the committee, Assembly Concurrent Resolution No.165 strongly urges the Department of Human Services (DHS) to apply for any federal waivers available to increase and extend access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and ease any administrative barriers to accessing benefits that arise from the nationwide outbreak of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Many New Jersey school districts, colleges and universities, and businesses have closed their facilities, encouraging students and employees to study and work remotely as part of the State's effort to stem the spread of COVID-19. As a result, many hourly-wage earners are experiencing a sudden reduction in their weekly income, affecting their ability to purchase a sufficient quantity of nutritious food for their families. For some of these individuals, the amount of their monthly SNAP benefit, which is based on the family's income, may be insufficient as they experience a reduction in their employment hours. Additionally, with many schools, colleges, and universities closing in an effort to stem the spread of COVID-19, food-insecure students are losing access to the nutritious meals they usually receive at school.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which administers SNAP, has multiple tools at its disposal to help states address food insecurity during a public health emergency, such as the COVID-19 outbreak. The USDA is authorized to grant state waivers from certain SNAP program requirements, allowing states to streamline program administration, extend beneficiary certification periods, and permit online benefits enrollment.