

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 148

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 23, 2020

Sponsored by:

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SYNOPSIS

Urges US Congress to allow Secretary of Agriculture to implement Pandemic-Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** urging United States Congress to
2 allow the Secretary of Agriculture to the implement Pandemic-
3 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
4

5 **WHEREAS**, Currently, 42 million individuals in the United States
6 participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
7 (SNAP), which provides unemployed, homeless, elderly or disabled
8 persons, persons receiving welfare or public assistance, and
9 individuals working for low wages with a supplemental income to
10 purchase nutritious foods; and

11 **WHEREAS**, Crises, such as global disease pandemics, can further
12 exacerbate already present financial struggles and create financial
13 struggles among persons who were previously financially-stable;
14 and

15 **WHEREAS**, Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, is a respiratory
16 illness that was first identified during an outbreak in Wuhan, China
17 and has since expanded across various continents including Asia,
18 Europe, North America, South America, Africa, and Australia; and

19 **WHEREAS**, There have been thousands of cases of COVID-19
20 confirmed worldwide with cases in the United States and New
21 Jersey, and the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 is
22 expected to rise into the future; and

23 **WHEREAS**, The COVID-19 outbreak has caused states, businesses, and
24 schools to participate in “social distancing” steps to prevent the
25 further spread of the disease; these business and school closures
26 leave hourly workers without income and leave millions of low-
27 income children at risk of missing meals provided by schools; and

28 **WHEREAS**, The current SNAP can be expanded to become the
29 Pandemic-Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (P-SNAP),
30 which was authorized during the 2009 outbreak of H1N1 more
31 commonly referred to as the Swine Flu, in order to effectively
32 address the additional need for nutritional services during the
33 COVID-19 pandemic; and

34 **WHEREAS**, P-SNAP would allow for families and individuals who are
35 unable to work or attend school, as a result of the COVID-19
36 outbreak, to quickly receive much needed benefits to purchase
37 nutritional foods; and

38 **WHEREAS**, P-SNAP would expand SNAP eligibility to certain
39 families and individuals affected by COVID-19 who would not
40 have previously been eligible to receive assistance under the
41 ordinary SNAP requirements while also increasing monetary aid for
42 previous SNAP users; and

43 **WHEREAS**, P-SNAP would also operate under reduced contact with
44 clients by encouraging mail, telephone, and online applications, the
45 use of telephone interviews instead of in-person interviews, and the
46 delivery of Electronic Benefits Transfer Cards by mail, which
47 would avoid the further spread of COVID-19 while increasing
48 access to P-SNAP services; and

49 **WHEREAS**, Implementing P-SNAP would provide essential financial
50 aid to struggling individuals and families, ensure these individuals

1 and families can remain well-fed during the pandemic, and ease
2 nervousness and panic among individuals and families who fear
3 COVID-19 will impact their ability to eat or provide food for their
4 families; now, therefore,

5
6 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New
7 Jersey:

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9 1. This House urges the United States Congress to allow the
10 Secretary of Agriculture to implement P-SNAP.

11
12 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
13 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the
14 Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the
15 United States House of Representatives, the members of the New
16 Jersey congressional delegation, and the United States Secretary of
17 Agriculture.

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19
20 STATEMENT

21
22 The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the
23 United States' largest anti-hunger program, is relied upon by over
24 42 million people. SNAP provides eligible individuals and families
25 with supplemental income to purchase nutritious food. During
26 crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, financial struggles among
27 SNAP participants are exacerbated and new financial struggles arise
28 among individuals and families who were financially stable prior to
29 the pandemic. COVID-19 has caused many business and schools to
30 close, which has directly affected students who received meals
31 provided by their schools and hourly workers who have been forced
32 to stay home from work without income.

33 For these reasons, the Pandemic-Supplemental Nutrition
34 Assistance Program (P-SNAP) should be implemented. P-SNAP
35 will expand eligibility to receive SNAP benefits to people who
36 would not have met the previous the requirements for SNAP, and it
37 will also provide additional monetary aid to SNAP users who were
38 additionally impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. P-SNAP will
39 allow for families and individuals impacted by the Coronavirus to
40 continue to purchase and consume nutritious meals. P-SNAP will
41 also increase application and interviewing flexibility among
42 potential new clients and restrict face-to-face contact within the
43 application process in an effort to prevent the further spread of
44 COVID-19.

45 The United States Congress should allow the Secretary of
46 Agriculture to implement P-SNAP to ensure low-income, struggling
47 individuals and families can receive the assistance they need during
48 the COVID-19 pandemic.