SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2955

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 6, 2021

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 2955.

As amended, this bill would require the Commissioner of Human Services to request that the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) take such steps as are necessary to allow "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program" (SNAP) benefits to be used to pay the delivery charge for home delivery of an individual's SNAP-eligible grocery purchase.

In March 2020, the USDA allowed New Jersey SNAP beneficiaries to participate in a pilot program under which SNAP beneficiaries may use SNAP funds to purchase groceries online through certain participating retailers. The pilot program does not currently allow the use of SNAP funds to pay the fee charged for home delivery of grocery purchases, which results in these costs being absorbed as an added out-of-pocket expense for SNAP beneficiaries.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to remove language allowing the use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds to pay delivery fees for groceries purchased online, with the Commissioner of Human Services applying to the federal Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) for any waivers as would be needed to authorize this use of SNAP funds. Instead, the Commissioner of Human Services will be required to request that the FNS take such steps as are necessary to allow SNAP benefits to be used to pay these delivery fees.

These committee amendments reflect the fact that the FNS does not currently have a waiver process in place that would allow for states to individually authorize expansions in the authorized use of SNAP funds, and so the FNS will need to take administrative steps to authorize the use of SNAP funds to pay delivery fees for authorized online grocery purchases.