



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1043

Resolution condemning the Trump Administration's plan to cut food stamps for 3 million People.

By Council Members Cabrera, Kallos and Cornegy

Food stamps, now known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), were originally established as a way to strengthen declining crop prices through commodities distribution following the Great Depression; and

Whereas, The first food stamp program was operationalized from 1939 to 1943 to provide food assistance, by way of coordinated transfers of unmarketable food surpluses, to the 25 percent of Americans who were experiencing record unemployment as a result of the Great Depression; and

Whereas, As American farmers were able to create and sustain food surpluses after World War II, the overage was distributed to hungry people in Europe, prompting policymakers to argue that people living in poverty in the United States (U.S.) should also reap the rewards of any excess domestic food supplies; and

Whereas, Although the Food Stamp Act of 1964 sought to address the gaps in local commodity distribution by connecting hungry individuals with surplus crops, it often failed to meet the balanced nutritional needs of its program recipients; and

Whereas, In 1971, commodity distribution was by and large discontinued in favor of food stamps, which allowed program participants to make their own decisions about the food they chose to purchase; and

Whereas, Today SNAP provides essential monthly nutritional support to over 40 million low-income, low-wage working families, seniors, people living with disabilities and individuals living on fixed incomes; and

Whereas, In New York State, more than 55 percent of SNAP recipients are from families with children,

46 percent are from families with members who are elderly or have disabilities and more than 43 percent of SNAP recipients are members of working families; and

Whereas, In October 2018, the Department of Homeland Security published a proposed rule change to broaden the definition of who is considered to be a public charge, thereby expanding the criteria of inadmissibility for legal entry into the U.S. by considering whether an individual is, based on the totality of their circumstances, deemed more likely than not to become dependent upon a public social service, such as health, housing and nutritional programs; and

Whereas, The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture has proposed changes in a key SNAP rule which, if implemented, would eliminate SNAP benefits for an estimated 3.1 million people by reigning in the states' ability to enroll recipients earning more than 130 percent of the federal poverty guidelines while capping eligibility to an annual income of \$32,640.00 for a family of four; and

Whereas, A recent Center on Budget and Policy Priorities study found SNAP benefits employed one of the most rigorous quality control systems of any public benefits program, enabling low-income households to afford healthy food while mitigating the effects of severe poverty; and

Whereas, Moody's Analytics estimates that every \$1 increase in SNAP benefits generates about \$1.70 in economic activity, stimulating economic growth and helping to create jobs; and

Whereas, Since 2017, there has been a noticeable chilling effect, as there has been a decline in registration for SNAP benefits and an uptick in withdrawals among eligible New York immigrants, which is thought to be due to fear of potential immigration consequences as a result of the policies announced by the Trump Administration; and

Whereas, On August 12, 2019, the Trump Administration released a final rule that, if upheld in court and implemented, will restrict green cards and other immigration benefits for individuals who use food assistance programs such as SNAP or other forms of public welfare; and

Whereas, In 2019, SNAP benefits enabled 1.6 million New Yorkers, or nearly 20 percent of the City's

population, to put food on the table and provide essential nutritional supports for themselves and their families;
now, therefore, be it

Resolved, The New York City Council condemns the Trump Administration's plan to cut food stamps
for 3 million people.

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