



## National WIC Association

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February 10, 2026

**The Honorable Austin Harris, Chair**  
House Health and Human Services Committee

**The Honorable Chad Ingels**  
**The Honorable Ross Wilburn**

**Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee**  
Iowa House of Representatives

Dear Chair Harris, Representative Ingels, Representative Wilburn, and Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

On behalf of the National WIC Association—the nonprofit membership organization representing WIC providers from more than 12,000 direct service agencies nationwide, including in Iowa—I **write to strongly oppose House Study Bill 696**. This bill will jeopardize access to critical WIC services for certain Iowan immigrant families.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is the nation's largest public health nutrition program, serving 6.7 million pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children under the age of 5, **including more than 62,000 Iowans**. WIC's critical services include providing healthy foods, nutrition education, and breastfeeding support during these critical life stages for eligible women, infants, and children. **These services ensure the over 35,000 children and 14,000 babies participating in WIC in Iowa have the healthiest possible start in life, which improves health and child development outcomes.**

In addition, for every dollar invested in WIC, a wholly federally funded program, \$2.48 dollars are saved in medical, education, and productivity costs. **In FY25, WIC supported the Iowa economy with an investment of \$61.7 million in food and formula benefits and \$19.5 million in nutrition, breastfeeding services, and program operations funding.** This investment directly benefits Iowan farmers, grocery stores, farmers markets, and other local businesses.

House Study Bill 696 would restrict access to these critical benefits for certain immigrant families in Iowa. By preventing WIC from serving every eligible individual, HSB 696 will jeopardize the wellbeing of Iowans, leading to worse pregnancy and birth outcomes, lower rates of breastfeeding initiation and duration, and poorer diet quality. **WIC already has strict eligibility standards**, requiring all participants to be low income, reside in the state where they are receiving WIC services, and be at nutritional risk, ensuring they will benefit from WIC's targeted nutrition support. The restriction will also reduce the infusion of federal funds which will directly impact Iowa's economy.

**I urge you in the strongest possible terms to oppose HSB 696**, a bill which will jeopardize the health, wellbeing, and food security of Iowan families, which will risk the foundation of a healthier next generation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Georgia Machell  
President and CEO  
National WIC Association

Georgia Machell  
President & CEO

Jen Nicklas  
Louisiana  
Chair

Kate Franken  
Minnesota  
Chair-Emeritus

Samar McGregor  
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