

Comment Report

Health and Human Services

Date: 02/28/2023

Time: 01:00 PM

Location: RM 103, Sup. Ct. Chamber

Name: Tiffany Welch

Comment: I oppose HF 3. Childhood hunger has been a problem in iowa for a long time, and making it harder for families to access SNAP benefits hurts children. I strongly oppose the additional asset limits as it discourages saving, making families and children in even more precarious financial situations.

Name: Shirley Davis

Comment: I oppose House File 3. 42% of SNAP recipients are children, and with 80,190 children facing hunger in Iowa, now is not the time to make it harder for children to get the nutrition they need. I strongly oppose additional asset limits and additional verification and work requirements to qualify for food benefits, and I encourage you to instead support policies that improve access to healthy, fresh foods.

Name: Joy Peterson

Comment: I strongly oppose House File 3. 42% of SNAP recipients are children, and with 80,190 children facing hunger in Iowa, now is not the time to make it harder for children to get the nutrition they need. I don't believe asset limits do anything to help struggling families. Why punish anyone wise enough to be saving to be able to be selfsufficient. Therefore, I oppose additional asset limits and additional verification and work requirements to qualify for food benefits, and I encourage you to instead support policies that improve access to healthy, fresh foods.

Name: Allison Canning

Comment: I oppose House File 3. 42% of SNAP recipients are children, and with 80,190 children facing hunger in Iowa, now is not the time to make it harder for children to get the nutrition they need. I strongly oppose additional asset limits and additional verification and work requirements to qualify for food benefits, and I encourage you to instead support policies that improve access to healthy, fresh foods.

Name: Tanya Browning

Comment: I strongly oppose HF 3. Why are we making it harder to help people, especially children, access food? The asset limits are cruel and make people want to save less, should they fall on hard times. Kids are especially at risk for this bill to harm them. Instead of HF, please focus on ways to improve high nutrition food, like expanding the double up food bucks program. That helps families and famers and grocers. Stop hurting kids

Name: Marilyn Brown

Comment: Please see that the children of Iowa get the nutrition they need. If politicians really cared about children there wouldn't be a hungry child in Iowa!

Name: Mary Airy

Comment: I oppose House File 3. 42% of SNAP recipients are children, and with 80,190 children facing hunger in Iowa, now is not the time to make it harder for children to get the nutrition they need. I strongly oppose additional asset limits and additional verification and work requirements to qualify for food benefits, and I encourage you to instead support policies that improve access to healthy, fresh foods. As a retired

early childhood educator I oppose this legislation because it results could effect the wellbeing and development of children living in food insecure households.

Name: Riley Brannian

Comment: I strongly oppose House File 3. 42% of SNAP recipients are children, and with 80,190 children facing hunger in Iowa, now is not the time to make it harder for children to get the nutrition they need. I strongly oppose additional asset limits and additional verification and work requirements to qualify for food benefits, and I encourage you to instead support policies that improve access to healthy, fresh foods.

Name: Tabitha Simms-Quigley

Comment: Im strongly opposed to HF 3. Making food harder to access hurts everyone, including and especially children. Asset limitations, work requirements, etc are all beyond a childs control. Please make healthy food more accessible, not less accessible

Name: Amber Beitzel

Comment: I STONGLY oppose HF 3. I strongly oppose additional asset limits and additional verification and work requirements to qualify for food benefits, and I encourage you to instead support policies that improve access to healthy, fresh foods.

Name: Jennifer Cooke

Comment: I oppose HF3. Just scrap it and try again please. SNAP benefits have been at an all time low of being utilized for over a decade. Most families that need them are already struggling to get access to them. Thus creating a heavy burden for our food pantries. Asset testing is just going to create a deep financial hole that will be hard for people to dig out. Not allowing people to save makes poor people poorer. The contingency that the USDA grants a waiver to restrict soda and candy in order to get \$1Million for Double Up Food Bucks is a way to hold nutritious foods ransom and not have any authenticity for really offering the Double Up Food Bucks in the first place. This alone would be better off as a stand alone bill that would be effective in getting nutritious foods to those that in our community that need it most. Please be compassionate for your constituents and try to step in recipients shoes and ask yourself if you would be ok if these restrictions were given to you.

Name: Kayla Perkins

Comment: I oppose HF 3. Benefits should not require a battle to be received. Children are our most vulnerable population, and are dependent on their families to thrive. How are these families supposed to help their children, let alone themselves, to get a better life when any assistance would require them to stay in poverty to continue to receive help? These are all beyond a childs control. HF 3 would only harm children and make it that much harder for kids to be fed and to have food on their tables. Instead of adding limitations, turn your focus to increasing access to highly nutritious foods, like the double up food bucks program. Put kids before money and you will see a brighter future happen one child at a time.

Name: Brandy Sickels

Comment: I strongly oppose additional asset limits and additional verification and work requirements to qualify for food benefit. There are so many children in need of food assistance and this just increases barriers and hurts the poor. The asset limit will have a cascading negative effect. I encourage you to instead support policies that improve access to healthy, fresh foods. In addition, providing finicial education could be helpful. Passs on knowledge instead of handing out rules and restrictions. Appreciate the work you're putting in. Please keep children and family front of mind.

Name: Donna Godar

Comment: As a retired kindergarten teacher, parent of 4 and grandparent of 5, I oppose House

File 3. 42% of SNAP recipients are children, and with 80,190 children facing hunger in Iowa, now is not the time to make it harder for children to get the nutrition they need. That is why so many communities in Iowa offer some type of weekend backpack program to support these families. I strongly oppose additional asset limits and additional verification and work requirements to qualify for food benefits, and I encourage you to instead support policies that improve access to healthy, fresh foods. As a teacher, I know the negative impact of hunger has on young children. They have a hard time concentrating when they are concerned about when their next meal will happen. Please support children and families instead of making it more difficult for them.

Name: Tanya Keith

Comment: I oppose HF3. We need to make life easier for people who are struggling. People may lose a job and need SNAP to get by but be disqualified because of things they own.

Name: Susanne Anderson

Comment: I strongly appose house file 3. Parents deserve to feed their children a balanced diet of their choosing. As a parent of a child with autism, I can tell you that it can be an obstacle to get your child to eat certain foods and one must be creative to get your child to eat. As a teacher, I can tell you that children need a variety of foods to grow healthy. Their taste buds are constantly changing and eating should be enjoyable. As a past parent on SNAP, I can tell you that sometimes, buying your child a sucker, soda, or unhealthy snack is the one thing they can look forward to when their parents cannot afford new clothes or toys. Parents should choose the food their child eats. Thank you for your time.

Name: Catherine Meyer

Comment: My grandchildren receive SNAP benefits. At current levels I have to help them get healthy meals. This is difficult and keeps me working when I want to retire. Their mother works, but her wages are low. I strongly oppose House File 3. 42% of SNAP recipients are children, and with 80,190 children facing hunger in Iowa, now is not the time to make it harder for children to get the nutrition they need. I strongly oppose additional asset limits and additional verification and work requirements to qualify for food benefits, and I encourage you to instead support policies that improve access to healthy, fresh foods. This is personal and very unfair to families doing the best they can.

Name: Kashana Gohl

Comment: I am strongly opposed to increased asset limits, recertification checks and mandatory trainings proposed as part of HF3. I am a fulltime working mom with two children with dietary allergies, learning disabilities and sensory issues. My fulltime gross monthly income averages out to about \$1800, so we already have a tendency to run out of SNAP before the end of each month. With rising costs of everything from food to gas, there is no room to save, and I feel like each year brings a new crisis that causes us to count on tax refunds to pay for things like vehicle repairs and catching up on other bills. I've had to skip paying the power bill at times to ensure we have enough food, or I have to choose to be late on rent. Even though we struggle, the public conversation around people who receive assistance makes me ashamed to go to food pantries or even the gospel mission to eat because I know there are others that struggle, probably more than we do. As far as mandating participating in trainings, increasing the number of recertification checks, I work fulltime, my children go to school, we have mental health appointments to support their learning and behavioral challenges. There are no more hours in the day to devote to additional hurdles. Lawmakers need to stop assuming that families like mine who benefit from SNAP are in need of additional checkups, asset limits and restrictions. Instead, invest more in programs like Double Up Food Bucks. A part of HF 3 commits \$1 million to this program so families like mine can access more fresh fruits and vegetables. If

ected leaders could pass this without limitations, it would be a step in the right direction. Now is not the time to make it harder to access benefits. Focus on solutions that help, not find ways to make it harder on children and families.

Name: Mindy Kruckenberg

Comment: I strongly oppose House File 3. Inflation is making navigating budgets difficult for everyone. How awful to punish SNAP recipients now, especially when 42% of them are children.

Name: Amy Bruner

Comment: I oppose House File 3. 42% of SNAP recipients are children, and with 80,190 children facing hunger in Iowa, now is not the time to make it harder for children to get the nutrition they need. I strongly oppose additional asset limits and additional verification and work requirements to qualify for food benefits, and I encourage you to instead support policies that improve access to healthy, fresh foods.

Name: Diane Duncan-Goldsmith

Comment: I oppose HR 3I was Director of Nutrition Services for the Iowa City Community School District when, for the 200809 school year, direct certification was implemented. This process automatically certified eligible children for free meals based on families receiving SNAP (food stamp) benefits; all that was needed was to download a file containing all eligible families in our district. Because of this, families no longer had to submit yearly meal applications and children in hundreds of families representing several thousand students became immediately eligible for free meal benefits. Republican bill HF3, an Act relating to public assistance program integrity, was introduced by Speaker Grassley and 38 House other members (Holt, Golding, Wheeler, Stone, Dunwell, Mommsen, Collins, Gustoff, Fisher, Moore, Jeneary, Carlson, Vondran, Stoltenberg, Wulf, Shipley, Bradley, Sherman, Deyoe, Graber, Wills, Rinker, P. Thompson, Johnson, Harris, Boden, Nordman, Sorensen, Gehlbach, Kaufmann, Osmundson, Thomson, M. Thompson, Wood, Hora, Windschitl, Bossman, and Gerhold). The bill includes additional levels of accountability including authorization and asset testing which they say is needed to limit program fraud. In the 2020 fiscal year, Iowa disqualified 322 out of 305,045 people on SNAP, and actually convicted just four people of fraud for a fraud rate of 0.1%; is this really a program where thousands of Iowans are cheating the system. The Senate version of this bill references needing a third party vendor to manage this new integrity verification system eight times. What will this bill cost to manage such "blatant" abuse of SNAP benefit? What evidence-based facts and data have been provided to support this claim, from what I can tell, there is no evidence of abuse. If families cannot navigate the new application process and lose SNAP benefits, how many children from across the state will not automatically qualify for free school meals, a state in which this year just over 42% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals? SNAP benefits are fully funded by the federal government; the state only covers half the administrative costs; costs which in 2020 were a little over \$22 million all the while Republicans and Governor Reynolds continue to brag about the state's current budget surplus of almost \$2 billion. If the goal is to decrease the number of families receiving SNAP; how does this help address and alleviate hunger and food insecurity in Iowa? Does the taxpayer-funded stipend legislators receive while in session limit their food choices to the W.I.C. food list? If Republican legislators think families in Iowa are not food insecure here are some facts. According to FeedingAmerica.org in Iowa, 2292,500 people (1 in 14) are facing hunger and of those 80,160 are children (1 in 9). Here are facts from the Johnson County Community Food Bank: from January 1 through 3 p.m., January 27, 2023, roughly 144,000 pounds of food were provided to 3,741 households. The irony of this bill is the fact former Governor Branstad was just appointed President of the World Food Prize, acknowledging his integral role in creating the Iowa Hunger Summit which has been instrumental in combating food insecurity in Iowa and around the world. Apparently, Representative Grassley and the other supporters of

this bill have forgotten Iowas long history of actually actively addressing hunger. It amazes me so many Republican House members believe HF 3 is a good bill for Iowa. This just seems to be another example of bill in search of a problem that does not exist.

Name: Jennifer Harris

Comment: These proposals are dangerous and dehumanizing. Our Governor is proud of a nearly 2 billion dollar surplus attained by cutting off a source of revenue to social programs. These policies force the poor to ultimately pay for a government surplus that will not be shared in return.

Name: Marissa Tillman

Comment: 70% of SNAP benefits go to working families with CHILDREN. Please dont take food and nutrition away from children who are already food insecure. Thank you.

Name: Jonathan Danker

Comment: I oppose this bill because no child should go hungry.

Name:

EJ Wallace

Comment:

My name is E.J. Wallace, Advisor for State and Electoral Campaigns at Save the Children Action Network (SCAN). I and many of the over 8,600 SCAN advocates in Iowa are very opposed to HF3, and urge you to oppose it too! I'm also an Iowan whose mother utilized SNAP benefits when my sister and I needed them the most. She didn't stay on forever, but the cushion provided much needed assistance for us so we could access the nutrition we needed to grow, learn, and succeed. The asset limits proposed in HF3 and additional reporting requirements would have not allowed us to access benefits or save enough to buy a car so my mother could get to work and eventually make enough so we didn't need assistance. Please don't just consider my story. A majority (6 in 10) of rural Americans who responded to a bipartisan poll of counties across the country, including counties right here in Iowa, are worried they might not be able to afford enough food to feed themselves and their families over the next year. Now is not the time to restrict benefits, which would hurt Iowa families, especially children who make up over 40% of those who benefit from SNAP. Other key findings and supported solutions from our poll conducted at the end of 2022, which can be found attached. Please note that a strong majority of those polled selfidentified as registered Republican voters: . 64% of rural voters say they or someone they know is struggling to afford to feed their family.. 53% of rural voters strongly support expanding the Double Up Food Bucks program that enables Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to get twice the fresh fruits and veggies. (Total support: 89%). 55% of rural voters strongly support allowing those who qualify for other programs, like Medicaid or Head Start, to automatically qualify for food assistance programs. (Total support: 86%). 59% of rural voters strongly support ensuring more children in school have access to food through "backpack" programs where they can bring food home, or food pantries at school sites. (Total support: 92%). 56% of rural voters strongly support offering more programs that increase access to food for hardtoreach communities such as those that allow food boxes to be shipped or operate mobile pantries that go to outlying areas to better reach families. (Total support: 91%)Don't make it harder on rural folks who are already struggling to feed their families. Oppose HF3 in today's committee meeting.



Save the Children
Action Network™

Rural American's Want Action to Address Hunger



Nearly **three-quarters** of rural voters (72%) say they are **changing** how or **what food they buy** due to increasing grocery costs.



64% of rural voters say they or someone **they know is struggling** to afford to feed their family.



Half of rural parents say they are **struggling to afford to feed** their families.



6 in 10 rural voters are worried they **might not be able to afford enough food to feed** themselves and their families over the next year

Rural Americans Support Policies to Address Hunger

- **53%** of rural voters **strongly support** expanding the **Double Up Food Bucks** program that enables Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to get twice the fresh fruits and veggies. (Total support: 89%)
- **55%** of rural voters **strongly support** allowing those who qualify for other programs, like Medicaid or Head Start, to **automatically qualify for food assistance** programs. (Total support: 86%)
- **59%** of rural voters **strongly support** ensuring more children in school have access to food through **"backpack" programs where they can bring food home**, or food pantries at school sites. (Total support: 92%)
- **56%** of rural voters **strongly support** offering more programs that **increase access to food for hard-to-reach communities** such as those that allow food boxes to be shipped or operate mobile pantries that go to outlying areas to better reach families. (Total support: 91%)

Data source: From November 9-20, 2022, New Bridge Strategy and Hart Research completed 1,006 interviews for Save the Children and Save the Children Action Network utilizing an online panel of American voters residing in rural counties who describe themselves as living in a rural area (72% of the sample) or a small town (28%). The credibility interval is +3.5% for the overall national sample.