

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 7

BY REPRESENTATIVE ECHOLS

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Children and Family Services to study out-of-state expenditures of Louisiana-issued Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits in order to identify fraud and to report findings of the study to the House Committee on Appropriations and the House Committee on Health and Welfare.

WHEREAS, the program formerly known as "food stamps" was renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2008; and

WHEREAS, SNAP, which is administered at the state level by the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), is the largest of all federal food assistance programs and provides support to needy households and to those making the transition from welfare to work; and

WHEREAS, in January of 2021, nine hundred eighty-one thousand seven hundred fifty-one individuals received nutrition assistance benefits through Louisiana's SNAP program; and

WHEREAS, according to a report that DCFS produced in March of 2021, in the twelve months preceding the production of the report, Louisiana-issued SNAP benefits had been expended in all fifty states of the United States; and

WHEREAS, in that twelve-month period, Louisiana-issued SNAP benefits were expended in the states bordering Louisiana in the following amounts:

(1) Twenty-five million six hundred nine thousand one hundred seventy-nine dollars of Louisiana-issued SNAP benefits were expended in Texas.

(2) Twelve million two hundred forty-one thousand one hundred sixty-four dollars of Louisiana-issued SNAP benefits were expended in Mississippi.

(3) Two million eight hundred thirty-two thousand two hundred ninety-four dollars of Louisiana-issued SNAP benefits were expended in Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, in the same twelve-month period, over two million seven hundred sixty two thousand dollars of Louisiana-issued SNAP benefits were expended in Georgia, over nine hundred seventy-nine thousand dollars of Louisiana-issued SNAP benefits were expended in California, over two hundred fifty-six thousand dollars of Louisiana-issued SNAP benefits were expended in the state of Washington, over sixty-five thousand dollars of Louisiana-issued SNAP benefits were expended in Massachusetts, and over thirty-two thousand dollars of Louisiana-issued SNAP benefits were expended in Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, also in that twelve-month period, the SNAP benefits of two thousand nine hundred thirty-five Louisiana SNAP enrollees were expended exclusively at out-of-state retailers for at least six consecutive months and the SNAP benefits of three hundred sixty-eight Louisiana SNAP enrollees were expended exclusively at out-of-state retailers for the entire twelve months; and

WHEREAS, with respect to administration of public assistance programs, the term "program integrity" refers to actions by the administering agency to detect and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse in those programs, and thereby ensure that public dollars are expended only on assistance and services for people who are eligible for benefits provided through those programs; and

WHEREAS, policing of out-of-state expenditures of Louisiana-issued SNAP benefits by DCFS will enhance program integrity in SNAP.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Children and Family Services to study out-of-state expenditures of Louisiana-issued Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits reflected in the twelve-month report that the department produced in March of 2021 in order to identify fraud in this major public assistance program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Children and Family Services shall report findings of the study called for in this Resolution to the House Committee on Appropriations and the House Committee on Health and Welfare on or before December 31, 2021.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES