

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 115

BY REPRESENTATIVE ROMERO

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Children and Family Services to seek a rule waiver from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to remove unhealthy foods from the list of approved foods that may be purchased with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

WHEREAS, the USDA allows unhealthy, high fat foods to be purchased with SNAP benefits contributing to the unhealthy lifestyle of our most vulnerable population; and

WHEREAS, in Louisiana, approximately forty percent of adults and twenty percent of students in grades nine through twelve are considered obese; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that obesity is associated with at least thirteen different types of cancer which make up forty percent of all cancers diagnosed; and

WHEREAS, children with obesity are more likely to have obesity as adults due to patterns of behavior learned at a young age; and

WHEREAS, adults with obesity have a higher risk of developing life-threatening illnesses such as heart disease, type-II diabetes, and cancer; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, annual obesity-related medical care costs in the United States were estimated to be nearly one hundred seventy-three billion dollars; and

WHEREAS, forty percent of all United States households do not live within one mile of healthy food retailers; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana has implemented Greaux the Good, a program that allows SNAP benefit recipients to receive a dollar-for-dollar match on their SNAP benefits, to encourage families to buy more fruits and vegetables while supporting small and local food producers; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, an average of nearly forty-three thousand individuals participated in the SNAP program nationwide at a cost of nearly one hundred thirteen billion dollars; and

WHEREAS, SNAP was established by federal law to be a cooperative endeavor between a state and the federal government where the program is administered by the state and financed by the federal government; and

WHEREAS, in Louisiana, SNAP is administered by the Department of Children and Family Services; and

WHEREAS, the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 defines "food" for the purposes of SNAP as any food or food product for home consumption except alcoholic beverages, tobacco, or hot foods ready for immediate consumption; and

WHEREAS, the USDA interprets the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to allow SNAP benefit recipients to purchase candy, cakes, potato chips, and other unhealthy foods; and

WHEREAS, due to the presence of federal law, the Department of Children and Family Services must seek approval from the federal government in the form of a waiver in order to alter the types of food that may be purchased with SNAP benefits.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Children and Family Services to seek a rule waiver from the United States Department of Agriculture to remove unhealthy foods from the list of approved foods that may be purchased with SNAP benefits.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Children and Family Services shall work with medical professionals and nutrition experts to determine which foods to remove from the list of approved foods to promote the health of children and families receiving SNAP benefits if a waiver is approved.

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

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE