

HB 207: Fight Hunger and Boost the State's Economy

Sponsored by Rep. Stansbury, Rep. Ferrary, Rep. Stefanics, and Rep. Bash




Food insecurity is a longstanding problem in New Mexico that the pandemic has made worse. A recent study projects New Mexico's food insecurity rate will increase from a 2018 level of **15.1% to 20.7%**, and child food insecurity will rise from a 2018 level of **23.8% to 33.9%** due to the economic crisis resulting from the pandemic.



HB 207 would:

Require state agencies to work together to directly address the causes of food insecurity in New Mexico.

Maximize federal dollars to help families afford groceries through the SNAP program. SNAP is the nation's first line of defense against hunger. The state should maximize its participation. Section 11 of HB 207 directs HSD to seek and renew all federal SNAP waivers to increase benefits amounts and maximize qualification to food assistance.

-  **SNAP is a vital economic stimulus, especially in times of recession.** New Mexicans spend over \$632 million in SNAP benefits in over 1,500 local businesses all over our state. **Every dollar of SNAP benefits generates \$1.54 in economic activity for New Mexico.** During the Great Recession's peak year, SNAP participants spent \$50 billion in local stores, generating \$85 billion in economic activity while the overall economy was struggling.
-  **Increased access to SNAP keeps New Mexicans healthy and reduces healthcare costs.** Food insecurity leads to poor health outcomes and higher health care costs, and on average food-insecure households spend roughly 45% more on medical care in a year (\$6,100) than people in food-secure households (\$4,200). Reduction in health care costs through SNAP leads to cost savings in the Medicaid program, because the state and federal government share Medicaid costs, but the federal government pays 100% of SNAP benefits.
-  **SNAP increases opportunity for children who experience food insecurity.** Hunger has long-term negative consequences for children and for the State of New Mexico as a whole. Data shows that even modest increases in a family's budget during early childhood will lead to greater outcomes for that child later in life. In fact, data shows that six months of SNAP participation reduces food insecurity in children by a third.



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