

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 98

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 210th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 28, 2002

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman ROSE MARIE HECK

District 38 (Bergen)

SYNOPSIS

Memorializes Congress and President to enact H.R.2646 or similar legislation streamlining food stamp program application process.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



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1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** memorializing the Congress and the
2 President of the United States to enact H.R.2646 or similar
3 legislation streamlining the food stamp program application
4 process.

5
6 **WHEREAS**, The federal food stamp program authorized by the federal
7 "Food Stamp Act of 1977," Pub.L. 95-113 (7 U.S.C.s.2011 et seq.)
8 is the largest of the country's food assistance programs
9 administered by the Food and Nutrition Service of the United States
10 Department of Agriculture (USDA). The purpose of the food
11 stamp program is to end hunger and improve health by providing
12 benefits to eligible low-income households and helping them obtain
13 food for a nutritionally adequate diet; and

14 **WHEREAS**, As of March 2001, 17.3 million individuals in 7.4 million
15 households throughout the country received food stamps, a 38%
16 drop in the number of eligible individuals receiving food stamp
17 benefits since the number peaked at 28 million in 1994. This drop
18 reflects the fact that participation in the food stamp program
19 fluctuates due to changes in the economy, federal eligibility rules
20 and the accessibility of state application procedures; and

21 **WHEREAS**, More than 50% of all food stamp recipients are children
22 and 23% are elderly or individuals with disabilities; about nine out
23 of 10 households receiving food stamp benefits contain a child, an
24 elderly person or a person with a disability; and

25 **WHEREAS**, Throughout the 1990's many states imposed strict
26 paperwork and verification requirements for applicants and
27 recipients of food stamp benefits in response to the USDA's effort
28 to reduce errors and fraud in the food stamp program; these
29 requirements have made the process of applying and reapplying for
30 benefits more difficult for the majority of eligible households; and

31 **WHEREAS**, Over the past two years, the USDA has begun to pursue
32 more balanced policies concerning the food stamp program, policies
33 which try to ensure benefit accuracy and fraud prevention while
34 making food assistance more accessible to the families who are
35 most in need. This has allowed many states to develop ways in
36 which to simplify the application and eligibility process and improve
37 access to the food stamp program, including the adoption of a
38 shorter, less burdensome application form for use by program
39 applicants; and

40 **WHEREAS**, The enactment of H.R.2646 or similar legislation providing
41 financial incentives for all states, including New Jersey, to
42 streamline the food stamp program application process by requiring
43 states to develop and implement simplified application or eligibility
44 determination systems will improve access to the food stamp
45 program by all eligible households; now, therefore,

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1 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the General Assembly of the State of New*
2 *Jersey:*

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4 1. The Congress and the President of the United States are
5 respectfully memorialized to enact H.R.2646 or similar legislation
6 which requires states to develop and implement simplified application
7 or eligibility determination systems in order to improve access to the
8 food stamp program by all eligible households.

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10 2. Duly authenticated copies of this resolution, signed by the
11 Speaker of the General Assembly and attested by the Clerk of the
12 General Assembly, shall be transmitted to the President of the United
13 States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of
14 Representatives, the United States Secretary of Agriculture, the
15 Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Human Services, and
16 every member of the New Jersey Congressional delegation.

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STATEMENT

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21 This resolution memorializes Congress and the President of the
22 United States to enact H.R.2646, sponsored by Representative
23 Combest, or similiar legislation requiring states to develop and
24 implement simplified application or eligibility determination systems
25 in order to improve access to the food stamp program by all eligible
26 households. The federal legislation is necessary to ensure that states,
27 including New Jersey, design a food stamp program application form
28 in such a manner that the effort required to complete it is not unduly
29 burdensome to the applicant.