

# SENATE RESOLUTION No. 123

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY

### 218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 24, 2019

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN**

**District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)**

**Senator NILSA CRUZ-PEREZ**

**District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Condemns ongoing federal government shutdown, and urges U.S. Congress and President to take immediate action to reopen government and provide funding for “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” and other similar programs.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



SR123 GREENSTEIN, CRUZ-PEREZ

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- 1   **A SENATE RESOLUTION** condemning the current partial federal  
2   government shutdown, and urging the Congress and President of  
3   the United States to reopen government and fund the  
4   “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” and other similar  
5   programs.  
6
- 7   **WHEREAS**, A partial shutdown of the federal government, affecting  
8   nine federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture  
9   (USDA), was commenced at midnight on the morning of Saturday,  
10   December 22, 2018, and is presently ongoing; and
- 11   **WHEREAS**, The partial government shutdown is now ranked as the  
12   longest shutdown in American history; and
- 13   **WHEREAS**, Although the U.S. Senate, on December 18, 2018,  
14   unanimously passed, by voice vote, a continuing resolution that  
15   would have provided the short-term funding necessary to prevent  
16   the partial government shutdown, and although the incoming U.S.  
17   House of Representatives, on January 3, 2018, passed a similar  
18   short-term funding package, the President of the United States has  
19   refused to sign these short-term funding bills, and has indicated that  
20   he will be happy to continue the partial government shutdown for  
21   months, or even years, unless and until Congress appropriates more  
22   than \$5 billion to fund the construction of a physical wall along the  
23   nation’s southern border; and
- 24   **WHEREAS**, Although the partial government shutdown negatively  
25   affects all Americans, it particularly endangers the livelihoods of  
26   the nation’s poorest and most vulnerable citizens; and
- 27   **WHEREAS**, Most significantly, because the USDA is affected by the  
28   shutdown, millions of America’s poorest and most vulnerable  
29   citizens may be left to go hungry as the shutdown drags on; and
- 30   **WHEREAS**, As a result of the partial government shutdown, 95 percent  
31   of federal staff for the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Services has  
32   been furloughed, federal funding is not available for food assistance  
33   programs, including the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance  
34   Program for Women, Infants, and Children” (WIC), and the  
35   “Commodity Supplemental Food Program,” and the nation’s child  
36   nutrition assistance programs may cease to function when existing  
37   federal funds for those programs are exhausted in February; and
- 38   **WHEREAS**, The USDA is also warning that it may have to severely cut  
39   the nation’s largest, and most important, food assistance program,  
40   known as the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program”  
41   (SNAP), as a result of this partial government shutdown; and
- 42   **WHEREAS**, In September 2018 alone, the most recent month for which  
43   USDA data is available, SNAP served more than 38.5 million  
44   Americans (nearly 12 percent of the total U.S. population) at an  
45   approximate cost \$4.7 million; and
- 46   **WHEREAS**, Although current Congressional appropriations are  
47   sufficient to fund SNAP through January, commencing in February,  
48   the USDA will need to fund the program’s operations by tapping

1 into a \$3 billion emergency fund, which is insufficient to cover  
2 even two-thirds of the anticipated program costs for February; and  
3 **WHEREAS**, Unless the government reopens before the end of January,  
4 millions of Americans who live below the poverty line could be left  
5 in the lurch, and have their access to food reduced by February and  
6 eliminated by March; and  
7 **WHEREAS**, With each passing day that the federal government remains  
8 shut down, the livelihoods of the poorest Americans will be  
9 endangered all the more, and the continuation of this shutdown  
10 beyond January 2019 will ensure that these vulnerable citizens, who  
11 already struggle to get by, will be forced to endure even greater  
12 difficulties in satisfying their basic human needs; now, therefore,

13  
14 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate of the State of New Jersey:*

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16 1. This House strongly urges the Congress and President of the  
17 United States to take any and all actions necessary to ensure the  
18 immediate reopening of the federal government and the allocation  
19 of the federal funding that is needed to ensure the continued and  
20 uninterrupted operations of the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance  
21 Program,” as well as all other food and nutrition assistance  
22 programs that are operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

23  
24 2. In the event that the President of the United States vetoes  
25 legislation to reopen the federal government and provide funding  
26 for the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program” and other  
27 food and nutrition assistance programs, this House strongly urges  
28 the U.S. Congress to use its constitutional authority to immediately  
29 override that veto, and thereby reopen the government and provide  
30 the necessary funding for these essential programs.

31  
32 3. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,  
33 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the  
34 President of the United States, the majority and minority leaders of  
35 the U.S. Senate, the majority and minority leaders of the U.S.  
36 House of Representatives, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of  
37 Agriculture, and every member of Congress elected from this State.

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STATEMENT

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42 This resolution would respectfully urge the Congress and President  
43 of the United States to end the partial shutdown of the federal  
44 government, which began at midnight on the morning of Saturday,  
45 December 22, 2018, and is presently ongoing; and to ensure the  
46 continuation of federal funding for the “Supplemental Nutrition  
47 Assistance Program” (SNAP) and other food and nutrition assistance  
48 programs operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

1       Although the U.S. Senate, on December 18, 2018, unanimously  
2 passed, by voice vote, a continuing resolution that would have  
3 provided the short-term funding necessary to prevent the partial  
4 government shutdown, and although the incoming U.S. House of  
5 Representatives, on January 3, 2018, passed a similar short-term  
6 funding package, the President of the United States has, thus far,  
7 refused to sign these short-term funding bills, and has indicated that he  
8 will be happy to continue the partial government shutdown for months,  
9 or even years, unless and until Congress appropriates more than \$5  
10 billion to fund the construction of a physical wall along the nation's  
11 southern border.

12       The partial government shutdown is now ranked as the longest  
13 shutdown in this American history. Although the shutdown negatively  
14 affects all Americans, it particularly endangers the livelihoods of the  
15 nation's poorest and most vulnerable citizens. Most significantly,  
16 because the USDA is affected by the shutdown, millions of these  
17 citizens may be left to go hungry as the shutdown drags on.

18       As a result of the partial government shutdown, 95 percent of  
19 federal staff for the USDA's Food and Nutrition Services has been  
20 furloughed, federal funding is not available for food assistance  
21 programs, including the "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
22 for Women, Infants, and Children" (WIC), and the "Commodity  
23 Supplemental Food Program," and the nation's child nutrition  
24 assistance programs may cease to function when existing federal funds  
25 for those programs are exhausted in February. The USDA is also  
26 warning that the shutdown may force it to severely cut the nation's  
27 largest, and most important, food assistance program, known as the  
28 "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program" (SNAP), which, in  
29 September 2018 alone, served more than 38.5 million Americans at an  
30 approximate cost \$4.7 billion. Although current congressional  
31 appropriations are sufficient to fund SNAP through January,  
32 commencing in February, the USDA will need to fund the program's  
33 operations by tapping into a \$3 billion emergency fund, which is  
34 insufficient to cover even two-thirds of the anticipated program costs  
35 for February. Accordingly, unless the government reopens before the  
36 end of January, millions of Americans who live below the poverty line  
37 could be left in the lurch, and have their access to food reduced by  
38 February and eliminated by March.

39       With each passing day that the federal government remains closed,  
40 the livelihoods of the poorest Americans will be endangered all the  
41 more, and the continuation of this shutdown beyond January 2019 will  
42 ensure that these vulnerable citizens, who already struggle to get by,  
43 will be forced to endure even greater difficulties in satisfying their  
44 basic human needs. It is, therefore, imperative that the Congress and  
45 President of the United States take whatever action is necessary to  
46 ensure the immediate reopening of the federal government and the  
47 allocation of adequate federal funding for these essential food and  
48 nutrition assistance programs. Moreover, if the President vetoes

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1 congressionally passed legislation to reopen government and fund  
2 these programs, as he has threatened to do, it is imperative that the  
3 U.S. Congress use its constitutional authority to immediately override  
4 that veto, and thereby ensure the reopening of government and the  
5 funding of these essential programs, for the good of the country and its  
6 poorest and most vulnerable citizens.