

**ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT  
RESOLUTION No. 165**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
219th LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED MARCH 16, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman PEDRO MEJIA**

**District 32 (Bergen and Hudson)**

**Assemblyman VINCENT MAZZEO**

**District 2 (Atlantic)**

**Assemblywoman YVONNE LOPEZ**

**District 19 (Middlesex)**

**Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE**

**District 19 (Middlesex)**

**Senator NELLIE POU**

**District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)**

**Senator CHRISTOPHER "KIP" BATEMAN**

**District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)**

**Senator NILSA I. CRUZ-PEREZ**

**District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)**

**Senator M. TERESA RUIZ**

**District 29 (Essex)**

**Senator THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.**

**District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)**

**Senator CHRIS A. BROWN**

**District 2 (Atlantic)**

**Senator DECLAN J. O'SCANLON, JR.**

**District 13 (Monmouth)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman Houghtaling, Assemblywomen Downey, Jasey, McKnight,  
Assemblyman Wimberly, Assemblywomen Speight, Chaparro, Dunn and  
Senator Stack**

**SYNOPSIS**

Urges DHS to apply for federal waivers to facilitate and increase access to SNAP benefits during coronavirus disease 2019 outbreak.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/19/2020)

1   **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** urging the Department of Human  
2   Services to take certain actions to sustain or increase access to  
3   food assistance benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition  
4   Assistance Program during the coronavirus disease 2019  
5   outbreak.  
6  
7   **WHEREAS**, The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or  
8   SNAP, provides critical assistance to supplement the food budget of  
9   low-income families nationwide; and  
10   **WHEREAS**, SNAP is regulated at the federal level by the United States  
11   Department of Agriculture (USDA) pursuant to the “Food and  
12   Nutrition Act of 2009,” Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.),  
13   and administered at the State level by the Division of Family  
14   Development, within the Department of Human Services, in  
15   conjunction with the county welfare agencies; and  
16   **WHEREAS**, In December 2019, over 671,000 New Jersey residents  
17   relied on SNAP food assistance to supplement their family food  
18   budget; and  
19   **WHEREAS**, As of March 13, 2020, New Jersey health officials had  
20   confirmed 29 cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in 10  
21   counties; and  
22   **WHEREAS**, In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Governor Murphy  
23   issued a State of Emergency and Public Health Emergency on  
24   March 9, 2020, authorizing all executive branch departments to  
25   utilize State resources to help communities and individuals respond  
26   to, and recover from, COVID-19 infection; and  
27   **WHEREAS**, Approximately 226 New Jersey school districts have  
28   closed in response to COVID-19, depriving thousands of food-  
29   insecure students of access to the nutritious meals they usually  
30   receive at school; and  
31   **WHEREAS**, Because many New Jersey colleges and universities have  
32   closed in response to the outbreak, many food-insecure students  
33   have lost access to their financial aid, which often covers the cost of  
34   an on-campus meal plan; and  
35   **WHEREAS**, As New Jersey businesses temporarily close, stop  
36   operation, or require employees to work remotely in order to stem  
37   the spread of COVID-19, many minimum-wage employees may  
38   face job loss, reduced work hours, and potential income loss; and  
39   **WHEREAS**, The USDA is authorized, during a public health  
40   emergency, to grant state waivers from certain SNAP requirements,  
41   such as allowing states to streamline program administration,  
42   extend beneficiary certification periods, and permit online benefits  
43   enrollment; and  
44   **WHEREAS**, The New Jersey Department of Human Services requested  
45   a waiver from the USDA on March 11, 2020, that would allow the  
46   State to issue a supplemental SNAP payment equal to a half-month  
47   of benefits to allow recipients to stock up on a two-week supply of

1 food to allow them to stay in their homes and help prevent the  
2 spread of COVID-19; now, therefore,

3

4 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the General Assembly of the State of New*  
5 *Jersey (the Senate concurring):*

6

7 1. The Legislature strongly urges the Department of Human  
8 Services to apply for any available federal waivers, pursuant to the  
9 Governor's declaration of a State of Emergency and Public Health  
10 Emergency, or any Presidential disaster declaration, to facilitate  
11 beneficiary access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
12 (SNAP) benefits and to ease any administrative barriers to  
13 accessing SNAP benefits.

14

15 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,  
16 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or the  
17 Secretary of the Senate to Governor Murphy, the Commissioner of  
18 Human Services, and the Director of the Division of Family  
19 Development.

20

21

22

#### STATEMENT

23

24 This concurrent resolution strongly urges the Department of  
25 Human Services (DHS) to apply for any federal waivers available to  
26 increase and extend access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance  
27 Program (SNAP) benefits, and ease any administrative barriers to  
28 accessing benefits that arise from the nationwide outbreak of the  
29 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

30 Many New Jersey school districts, colleges and universities, and  
31 businesses have closed their facilities, encouraging students and  
32 employees to study and work remotely, as part of the State's effort  
33 to stem the spread of COVID-19. As a result, many hourly-wage  
34 earners are experiencing a sudden reduction in their weekly income,  
35 affecting their ability to purchase a sufficient quantity of nutritious  
36 food for their families. For some of these individuals, the amount  
37 of their monthly SNAP benefit, which is based on the family's  
38 income, may be insufficient as they experience a reduction in their  
39 employment hours. Additionally, with many schools, colleges and  
40 universities closing in an effort to stem the spread of COVID-19,  
41 food-insecure students are losing access to the nutritious meals they  
42 usually receive at school.

43 The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which  
44 administers SNAP, has multiple tools at its disposal to help states  
45 address food insecurity during a public health emergency, such as  
46 the COVID-19 outbreak. The USDA is authorized to grant state  
47 waivers from certain SNAP program requirements, allowing states  
48 to streamline program administration, extend beneficiary

**ACR165 MEJIA, MAZZEO**

4

1 certification periods, and permit online benefits enrollment.  
2 Although the DHS has already applied for one such waiver, which  
3 would allow a supplemental SNAP payment equal to one half-  
4 month of benefits to allow beneficiaries to purchase a two-week  
5 supply of food to allow them to stay in their home and help prevent  
6 the spread of COVID-19, it is the sponsor's intent to urge the DHS  
7 to apply for any additional waivers as may be available, in order to  
8 provide expedited food assistance benefits to the New Jersey  
9 families whose incomes are reduced during the COVID-19  
10 outbreak.