

ASSEMBLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5881

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 16, 2021

The Assembly Women and Children Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 5881.

This bill directs the Division of Family Development in the Department of Human Services to implement an issuance schedule for newly eligible enrollees of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp program, in which the issuance of benefits is staggered throughout the month, provided that each household is issued benefits on or near the same date once a month. The issuance schedule implemented by the division is required to comply with the federal regulations outlined at 7 CRF s.274.2, which, among other things, allows state agencies to stagger the issuance of benefits as long as no more than 40 days elapses between the issuance of any two allotments for a household.

The issuance of SNAP benefits refers to the date when a household's SNAP benefits are uploaded onto their electronic benefits transfer card each month and are available for use at authorized food retail locations. Currently, all SNAP enrollees in New Jersey are issued benefits within the first five days of the month. Under this bill, new enrollees would be issued benefits through the month. In doing so, this bill codifies a best practice for SNAP recommended by the Food Research and Action Center. By staggering the issuance of benefits, the State can help reduce congestion and product availability limitations at local grocery stores and SNAP offices during the existing five-day monthly issuance period.

The bill also direct the Commissioner of Human Services to apply to the Food and Nutrition Service within the United States Department of Agriculture for any necessary waivers or approvals to implement the provisions of the bill. The bill is to take effect on the first day of the fourth month next following the date of enactment, but the commissioner may take such advance anticipatory administrative action as may be necessary for the implementation of the bill.