

Health and Human Services Committee

LB255

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Department of Health and Human Services

Good afternoon, Chairperson Howard, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Matt Wallen (M-A-T-T-W-A-L-L-E-N) and I am the Director of the Division of Children and Family Services in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

I am here to testify in opposition to LB255, which will increase the gross eligibility limit for a sub-program within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) from 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 140% of the FPL.

Currently, in Nebraska, SNAP has adopted the state option to implement a Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funded program to establish Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility. In Nebraska, this program is also known as the Expanded Resource Program. This sub-program within Nebraska SNAP allows the state to set the resource limit and income guidelines for individuals who qualify for Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility.

As was previously mentioned, LB255 proposes to increase the gross income guidelines for those who qualify for Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility from the current gross income guideline of 130% of FPL to 140% of the FPL for individuals who qualify for this TANF-Funded program. The net income guideline for SNAP would not change. The net income level would remain at 100% of the FPL, this is set in federal statute.

Based on US Census figures, increasing the FPL from 130% to 140% would increase the potential client base by approximately 78,700 persons, or 35,361 households utilizing two people as the average household size. It is anticipated that 25% or 8,840 of the 35,361 new qualifying households will apply for SNAP, requiring at least two hours to process applications. Due to the amount of eligible expenses necessary to pass the net income test, it is estimated that approximately 5%, or 1,768 of these households would be eligible for SNAP. Annual processing time for eligible households is five hours, this includes time to recertify and update the information as changes occur. The addition of 1,768 SNAP households would require hiring 13 Social Service Workers, one Social Services Supervisor, and one Case Aide. As the fiscal note shows, LB 255 would require an annual expense of approximately \$1million to implement. As a State agency, DHHS strives to optimize the tax dollars of hard working Nebraskans while helping those in our community with existing resources.

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.