

Health and Human Services Committee

LB 770

February 7, 2018

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Division of Children and Family Services

Department of Health and Human Services

Good afternoon, Senator Riepe, 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 LB 770.

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.

LB 770 proposes to increase the gross income guidelines for those who qualify for the Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility from the current gross income guideline of 130% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 160% of FPL for individuals who qualify for this TANF-Funded program. The net income guideline for SNAP would not change. This income level would remain at 100% of the FPL.

Based on U.S. Census figures, increasing the FPL from 130 to 160% would increase the potential client base by approximately 104,318 persons, or 46,757 households. Due to the amount of eligible expenses necessary to pass the net income test, it is estimated that approximately 15%, or 7,378 of these households would be eligible for SNAP benefits. The Department would receive the applications, conduct the interviews and determine the eligibility for the estimated 39,379 households who would apply but potentially not be eligible due to the high amount of expenses needed for the household to reach 100% FPL and receive a SNAP allotment. The addition of 46,757 SNAP applications would require 54 additional Social Service Workers (SSW) and 5 Social Service Supervisors, based on the required task time involved to complete the work. This bill will add 106,511 hours of work by Social Service Workers. The task times utilized include: 1 hour for Application Processing, 1 hour for 30% of applications to be received verbally via telephone, 4 hours casework to complete case review and case changes as they occur.

This significant increase in staffing is a major issue for the Division and the Department.

The SNAP/Department of Labor pilot project is assisting families in achieving better jobs, the pilot works with clients on budgeting so they are aware of income needs to avoid the cliff effect. This bill offers limited assistance to a small population who have an increase in income, therefore it does not have a big impact on the cliff effect. We remain willing to work with Senator McCollister to further our SNAP/Department of Labor pilot project.

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