

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-ONE

**JOINT RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NUTRITION
SERVICE TO INCLUDE CERTAIN NONFOOD ESSENTIALS IN
THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

WE, your Memorialists, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Maine now assembled in the First Regular Session, most respectfully present and petition the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service to enter into rulemaking, as follows:

WHEREAS, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, is a federally governed and funded program under the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service with shared state administration; and

WHEREAS, SNAP currently provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of qualifying recipients so they can purchase healthy food but fails to account for nonfood essentials, including toilet paper, soap, deodorant, toothpaste and menstrual products; and

WHEREAS, toilet paper, soap, deodorant, toothpaste and menstrual products are essential products needed for human dignity and health; and

WHEREAS, if a person struggles with access to food, that person likely also struggles with access to nonfood essentials; and

WHEREAS, a person who does not have access to nonfood essentials, especially menstrual products and toilet paper, may be forced to use inappropriate and unsafe alternatives, thereby putting that person's health and the health of the person's reproductive system at risk; and

WHEREAS, a person without access to nonfood essentials cannot equitably participate in work, the search for employment or many other activities due to the risk of embarrassment such as from odors or bleeding through clothing; and

WHEREAS, a person who lives in an abusive situation has an increased likelihood of having difficulty accessing menstrual products and other nonfood essentials; and

WHEREAS, it is a matter of human justice and dignity for recipients of SNAP benefits to be granted the authority to determine what essentials they most need; and

WHEREAS, the residents of this State who qualify for SNAP benefits have essential needs beyond food and should therefore be granted the dignity to select how to expend their SNAP benefits based upon their essential needs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, your Memorialists, respectfully urge and request that the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service enter into rulemaking to amend the stated goal of SNAP to "raising the level of nutrition and essential-need stability among low-income households and maintaining adequate levels of nutrition and nonfood-essentials

supplies by increasing the food and nonfood-essentials purchasing power of low-income families"; and be it further

RESOLVED: That We, your Memorialists, respectfully urge and request that the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service enter into rulemaking to expand the scope of SNAP benefits to include the following nonfood essentials for recipient purchase: toilet paper, soap, deodorant, toothpaste and menstrual products, including but not limited to tampons, pads, liners and reusable cups, underwear and shields; and be it further

RESOLVED: That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States, for consideration in the federal budgeting process; to the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service; to the Nutrition Service Administrator, United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service; to the Food and Nutrition Service Associate Administrator of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service; to the Northeast Regional Office of the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service; to the President of the United States Senate; to the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States; to each Member of the Maine Congressional Delegation; and to the Maine Department of Health and Human Services.