



129th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2019

Legislative Document

No. 752

H.P. 557

House of Representatives, February 11, 2019

An Act To Reduce Food Insecurity and Promote Economic Growth

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative FECTEAU of Biddeford.
Cosponsored by Representatives: GATTINE of Westbrook, HICKMAN of Winthrop,
JORGENSEN of Portland, McCREIGHT of Harpswell, MOONEN of Portland, Senators:
LIBBY of Androscoggin, VITELLI of Sagadahoc.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3104, sub-§17** is enacted to read:

3 **17. Waiver of federal limits on assistance for individuals residing in areas with**
4 **high unemployment or insufficient jobs.** Beginning with federal fiscal year 2020 and
5 for each federal fiscal year thereafter, the department shall seek a waiver pursuant to 7
6 United States Code, Section 2015(o)(4) to allow individuals otherwise subject to the 3-
7 month limit on food supplement program benefits pursuant to 7 United States Code,
8 Section 2015(o)(2) to continue to receive food supplement program benefits if those
9 individuals reside in counties, labor market areas or other areas that qualify for a waiver
10 because of high unemployment or a lack of a sufficient number of jobs to provide
11 employment for those individuals. The department shall adopt routine technical rules
12 pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A to implement this subsection.

13 **Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §3108, sub-§6** is enacted to read:

14 **6. Reliable data.** In calculating the amount of the food stamp standard utility
15 allowance, the department shall rely on reliable data reflecting actual utility costs in the
16 State.

17 **Sec. 3. Department of Health and Human Services to seek waiver.** The
18 Department of Health and Human Services shall submit a request to the United States
19 Department of Agriculture to waive the requirements for an asset test for determining the
20 eligibility of any household under the federal supplemental nutrition assistance program
21 administered by the State pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, section 3104
22 when the household includes an individual who is 60 years of age or older or an
23 individual with a disability or when the household does not include children.

24 **SUMMARY**

25 This bill accomplishes the following.

26 1. It directs the Department of Health and Human Services to seek a waiver
27 beginning with federal fiscal year 2020, which begins October 1, 2019, and for each
28 federal fiscal year thereafter to allow individuals otherwise subject to a 3-month limit on
29 federal food supplement program benefits to continue to receive benefits if those
30 individuals reside in counties, labor market areas or other areas that qualify for a waiver
31 because of high unemployment or a lack of a sufficient number of jobs to provide
32 employment for those individuals.

33 2. It requires the Department of Health and Human Services to calculate the amount
34 of the food stamp standard utility allowance using reliable data reflecting actual utility
35 costs in Maine.

36 3. It directs the Department of Health and Human Services to request the United
37 States Department of Agriculture to waive the asset test for determining the eligibility for
38 the federal supplemental nutrition assistance program of any household in which there is

1 an individual who is 60 years of age or older or an individual with a disability or that does
2 not include children.