

Testimony of Scott Carter
62 Buck n Doe Trail
Augusta, Maine
571-359-1042 Wednesday, March 5, 2026
Hearing before the Committee On Health and Human Services
Cross Building, Room 209 at 1:00 p.m.

Good afternoon, Chairs Ingwerson and Meyer, and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services. Thank you for holding this public hearing and for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Scott Carter, and I am a resident of Augusta. My comments today are my own based on my knowledge of social safety net programs that support our State's citizens facing economic and related challenges.

Prior to moving to Maine in 2021, I enjoyed a 30 year career in the Federal government, including serving as Chief of Government Affairs at USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) that administers the Nations 16 Federal nutrition programs including SNAP from 2007 to 2019, and as Disaster Response Coordinator for the FNS Office of Emergency Management from 2019-2021 before retiring in November 2021. I have an expert knowledge of the laws, regulations and policies that must be followed by states and local governments and organizations when administering federal government assistance programs.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO L.D. 2122

"An Act to Prevent Negative Impacts from Federal Funding Changes to and Fund Eligibility Determinations and Outreach for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program"

Amend the bill by inserting after Section 1 the following:

Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §3104, sub-§18 is enacted to read:

18. Snap Together Volunteers Program. A. Purpose. The Snap Together Volunteers program is established to provide a verified pathway for SNAP recipients to meet federal work requirements through community service. The program is designed to turn federal mandates into community assets by supporting all SNAP able-bodied adults without dependents, with a priority focus on adults aged 50 to 64 and veterans of the United States Armed Forces.

B. Competitive Grant Program. The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) and the Bureau of Veterans' Services shall administer a competitive grant program to award funds to eligible 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and organizations serving veterans and seniors operating in Maine to establish or expand volunteer programs that serve the people of Maine.

- **(1) Allowable Uses:** Funds may be used for staff salaries and administrative support to recruit, supervise, and report service hours for SNAP-eligible participants.
- **(2) Reporting:** Grant recipients shall submit quarterly reports on the number of unduplicated participants and total aggregate volunteer hours.

C. Annual Report. Beginning January 15, 2027, the administering agencies shall submit a joint annual report to the legislature detailing the program's impact, federal benefits retained, and the economic value of volunteer labor provided to the State.

Amend the bill in the emergency preamble by adding the following: "Whereas, the Snap Together Volunteers program is immediately necessary to prevent the loss of nutrition assistance for Maine's seniors and veterans facing new federal work mandates in 2026;"

Amend the bill by adjusting the appropriations section to include:

- **General Fund (DACF):** \$500,000 (FY27); \$500,000 (FY28)
- **General Fund (Bureau of Maine Veterans Services):** \$500,000 (FY27); \$500,000 (FY28)

For these reasons, I urge the committee and the full Legislature to support and pass LD 2122

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Scott Carter
Augusta
LD 2122

Testimony of Scott Carter
62 Buck n Doe Trail
Augusta, Maine
571-359-1042 Wednesday, March 5, 2026
Hearing before the Committee On Health and Human Services
Cross Building, Room 209 at 1:00 p.m.

Good afternoon, Chairs Ingwerson and Meyer, and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services. Thank you for holding this public hearing and for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Scott Carter, and I am a resident of Augusta. My comments today are my own based on my knowledge of social safety net programs that support our State's citizens facing economic and related challenges.

Prior to moving to Maine in 2021, I enjoyed a 30 year career in the Federal government, including serving as Chief of Government Affairs at USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) that administers the Nations 16 Federal nutrition programs including SNAP from 2007 to 2019, and as Disaster Response Coordinator for the FNS Office of Emergency Management from 2019-2021 before retiring in November 2021. I have an expert knowledge of the laws, regulations and policies that must be followed by states and local governments and organizations when administering federal government assistance programs.

The changes that have occurred to SNAP because of HR-1 are having real life consequences to all citizens, and especially for those facing challenges and utilizing SNAP to feed their families. The changes were short sighted and based on an ideological myth with the sole intent of making SNAP difficult to implement for states so they request a "Block Grant" to operate the SNAP program. The changes did not take into account the effects on retailers, farmers, or other local non-profits that will now have to assist folks who are facing hunger.

But the biggest changes are coming in October 2026 (FY-27) with the increased costs of the State's Administrative share to operate SNAP; and in October of 2027 (FY-28) the increased costs to the state to pay for SNAP benefits if the state does not achieve a 6% Quality Control Error rate in SNAP. The total is estimated to be an additional \$50-70 million dollars a year for the State of Maine. These are the two main tools the current Administration and Republican Party hope will get States to request a block grant.

The need for the State of Maine to ensure there will always be adequate support for food during a crisis is why I support LD 2122.

In addition, the changes that have occurred and will provide specific challenges to the State's Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDS) SNAP recipients up to age 64 and our veterans. They now have to meet work requirements of 80 hours a month. They can work or volunteer for those 80 hours in order to keep their SNAP benefits. To assist with the challenges many face finding full time work, I suggest the following amendment be added to LD 2122. The amendment creates the SNAP Together Volunteers grant program.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO L.D. 2122

"An Act to Prevent Negative Impacts from Federal Funding Changes to and Fund Eligibility Determinations and Outreach for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program"

Amend the bill by inserting after Section 1 the following:

Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §3104, sub-§18 is enacted to read:

18. Snap Together Volunteers Program.

A. Purpose.

The Snap Together Volunteers program is established to provide a verified pathway for SNAP recipients to meet federal work requirements through community service. The program is designed to turn federal mandates into community assets by supporting all SNAP able-bodied adults without dependents, with a priority focus on adults aged 50 to 64 and veterans of the United States Armed Forces.

B. Competitive Grant Program. The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) and the Bureau of Veterans' Services shall administer a competitive grant program to award funds to eligible 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and organizations serving veterans and seniors operating in Maine to establish or expand volunteer programs that serve the people of Maine.

(1) Allowable Uses: Funds may be used for staff salaries and administrative support to recruit, supervise, and report service hours for SNAP-eligible participants.

(2) Reporting: Grant recipients shall submit quarterly reports on the number of unduplicated participants and total aggregate volunteer hours.

C. Annual Report. Beginning January 15, 2027, the administering agencies shall submit a joint annual report to the legislature detailing the program's impact, federal benefits retained, and the economic value of volunteer labor provided to the State.

Amend the bill in the emergency preamble by adding the following: "Whereas, the Snap Together Volunteers program is immediately necessary to prevent the loss of nutrition assistance for Maine's seniors and veterans facing new federal work mandates in 2026;"

Amend the bill by adjusting the appropriations section to include:

General Fund (DACF): \$500,000 (FY27); \$500,000 (FY28)

General Fund (Bureau of Maine Veterans Services): \$500,000 (FY27); \$500,000 (FY28)

For these reasons, I urge the committee and the full Legislature to support and pass LD 2122.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions.