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Testimony of the Office for Family Independence, Maine DHHS

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
In support of LD 2037, *An Act to Align the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program with Federal Regulations*

Hearing Date: January 9, 2024

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Ian Yaffe, and I serve as the Director of the Office for Family Independence (OFI) in the Department of Health and Human Services. I am here today to testify in support of LD 2037, *An Act to Align the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program with Federal Regulations*. The Department is grateful to Senator Baldacci for sponsoring this proposal.

Current Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (or SNAP) statutory language disqualifies individuals who receive net lottery and gambling winnings of \$5,000 or more within a calendar month from receiving SNAP.

This bill proposes two changes that will align statutory language with federal regulations. First, it clarifies that disqualification from receiving SNAP due to an individual's lottery and gambling winnings impacts the entire SNAP household, rather than just the individual. Second, it aligns the financial threshold for this disqualification with federal requirements of \$3,750 in gross winnings in a single game. Federal requirements^{1,2} set the lottery and gambling winnings threshold as the maximum allowable resource limit for elderly or disabled households. This numerical threshold may change occasionally as it is adjusted for inflation per regulation and is shared with states by our SNAP federal partner, Food and Nutrition Services (or FNS). The current federal regulatory text states the threshold is \$3,000 and is adjusted for inflation which results in the current calculation of \$3,750.

In order to meet these requirements, OFI receives a monthly list of recipients from the Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS), Bureau of Alcoholic Beverages and Lottery Operations. This general process will not change with passage of this bill, except that OFI will change the guidelines for this report with DAFS and gaming entities as required.

We appreciate the Committee's time and attention and look forward to our continued work together meeting the nutrition needs of Mainers while maintaining the integrity of the SNAP program and adhering to federal requirements. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have and can make myself available for questions at the work session.

¹ See [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-C/part-273/subpart-D/section-273.8#p-273.8\(b\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-C/part-273/subpart-D/section-273.8#p-273.8(b))

² See [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-C/part-273/subpart-D/section-273.11#p-273.11\(r\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-C/part-273/subpart-D/section-273.11#p-273.11(r))