



Good Shepherd

FOOD BANK OF MAINE

February 24, 2025

Good Shepherd Food Bank of Maine testimony to the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services in opposition to LD 210, Part VV.

Good afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Joint Standing Committee Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Khadija Ahmed, and I am the Community Impact Manager for Good Shepherd Food Bank. I am here to express the Food Bank's opposition to Part VV of the budget.

Today, I stand before you to speak on an issue that affects millions of hardworking families across our nation—the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. This budget proposes cutting access to SNAP benefits for immigrant and minority communities. But I argue that doing so would be not only unjust but also harmful to our economy, public health, and the very values that define Maine

This cut would remove SNAP for legal immigrants while they are allowed to work and are looking for a job. Immigrant and minority families disproportionately experience food insecurity.

And once they are able to, many work multiple jobs, often in low-wage sectors like agriculture, food service, and caregiving—industries that are essential to our society yet fail to provide livable wages. SNAP is a lifeline that ensures these families do not have to choose between paying rent and feeding their children, and this particular benefit is the bridge that helps them while they are applying for and interviewing for jobs.

When families receive benefits, they spend them at local grocery stores and markets, keeping small businesses afloat and supporting jobs. Restricting access to SNAP would hurt not just families but also local economies.

Cutting SNAP would have dire consequences on public health. Food insecurity leads to malnutrition, higher rates of chronic illness, and increased healthcare costs. Children who lack proper nutrition struggle in school, affecting their future potential and society at large. The costs of hunger far outweigh the costs of SNAP.

Finally, we must consider our moral responsibility. Maine has long prided itself on being a land where hard work is rewarded, and everyone has a fair shot at success. Denying food assistance to

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struggling families contradicts these ideals. We need to be working to ensure equal access to basic human needs. That's why Maine has this specific SNAP benefit. Because we care about people, even in their hardest times.

Removing SNAP benefits from immigrant and minority communities is not just bad policy—it's inhumane. It would deepen poverty, harm children, weaken local economies and betray the values of opportunity and fairness. We must stand for policies that support the most vulnerable among us and fight for a future where no family goes hungry.

Sincerely,

Khadija Ahmed

Community Impact Manager for Good Shepherd Food Bank

kahmed@gsfb.org

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