



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002  
(207) 287-1440  
MAINE RELAY 711

**Paul R. Flynn**

78 Bessey Ridge Rd  
Albion, ME 04910  
Paul.Flynn@legislature.maine.gov  
Cell: (207) 314-5525

Testimony on  
**L.D. 938, “An Act to Implement Certain Local Spending and Sourcing Requirements  
Regarding the Statewide Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program”**

**Presented by  
Representative Paul R. Flynn  
District 63**

Health and Human Services Committee  
Thursday, April 3, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am State Representative Paul R. Flynn, and I represent the citizens of District 63, which consists of Albion, Freedom, Unity Township, and a portion of Winslow. I am here today to introduce L.D. 938, “*An Act to Implement Certain Local Spending and Sourcing Requirements Regarding the Statewide Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.*”

In 1999, my wife and I began operating Freedom General Store, in Freedom. It was a typical Maine general store, offering a standard fare from breakfast and lunch specials to pizza, sandwiches, groceries, and a mix of other sundry items from deer tagging to a bottle of liquor. We were also the local associated grocers -- rural one-stop shop for many common grocery items. As such, we participated in the federal food stamp program.

Twenty-six years ago, food stamps were food stamps. The recipient had a book of food stamp dollars, physical “cash” that they would present to the retailer. We would make change on the dollar with food stamps, and the change became cash to the recipient. A few years into owning the store, technology changed and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) did as well, as Food Supplement recipients were issued electronic cards in which to present for their benefits.

It was at this point, some 25 years ago, that this idea that I present today was born. My thought at the time, and now presented to you today, is a way to capture some of these federal Food Supplement benefits to assist the local economy on a more direct basis. The concept is to have a Food Supplement recipient spend a certain portion of the benefit in the local store.

The idea is that if a recipient who lives in zip code 04910, as an example, would have to spend 10% of their monthly benefit in a grocery store residing in the same zip code. Given the rural nature of many living

*Over, please*

District 63      Albion, Freedom and Winslow (Part) and the unorganized territories of; Unity Township

Printed on recycled paper

in zip codes with no qualifying store, the legislation, as presented from the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, is a geographic domain surrounding the recipient's address.

This L.D. is proposed as a means to assist local grocery stores in our most rural areas -- to take a federal subsidy being distributed into the rural areas of our state and to somehow capture at least a portion of that, thus keeping the money as local as possible. In addition to assisting the local store, there can be a benefit to the local food producers with a requirement as part of the program that at least 10% of a local store's perishable food inventory be sourced locally. This, in turn, supports our local family farms and agricultural producers.

This legislation is in no way presented to limit one's choices of what they can and cannot buy. All the eligible items allowed under the federal SNAP remain the same with no hindrances. Program benefit recipients can still buy the 30-pack of Pepsi and a case of Ho-Ho's.

The pure intent is to capture some of the federal SNAP money that comes into Maine and to further focus its economic impact to the local community through retail food outlets and our family farms.

In summary, our local rural economies are taking a beating for a myriad reasons -- too many to define, and, in most cases, totally beyond our ability to control. Yet, within this maze, attempting to affect any policies that assist the local retailer and local farms, using an already established program, seems to be a place that warrants our investigation.

Thank you for the time to testify, and I welcome any thoughts and questions.