Increase Access to SNAP: Implement Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility

Support HB1820 (Delegate Helmer)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP) is a federal food assistance program that helps low-income families put food on the table. Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) streamlines SNAP enrollment for all individuals receiving a TANF funded service.

The Problem:
43 states have implemented BBCE. Virginia is one of the seven who have not. As a result, Virginia is missing out on:
- Helping over 25,000 families put food on the table and
- Millions of federal dollars entering our economy.

Federal regulations allow for states to set SNAP eligibility levels between 130% and 200% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL). Virginia is at the bare minimum of 130%. Currently, to qualify for SNAP in Virginia, an applicant must:
- Have a gross income that must fall within 130% of the FPL,
- Have net income fall within 100% of FPL, and
- Pass an asset test.

The Solution:
Increase the gross income eligibility level to 200% of the FPL and remove the asset test.

The Wins:
This will increase access to SNAP for more children.
- Children who are eligible for SNAP are then also eligible for free school meals.
- This will help reduce school meal debt, which is a growing issue in VA schools.

Increasing the number of SNAP recipients in Virginia will pump more money into local economies, helping smaller grocery stores.
- Every SNAP dollar will generate ~$1.50 in economic activity. The state’s investment in BBCE will result in an estimated $10.5 million of economic activity.

Budget Request
- General Fund: $281,292 / Non-General Fund: $342,558

If funded, this budget amendment will help over 25,000 more families put food on the table and bring millions of dollars into the state.

More Information: Salaam Bhatti • salaam@vplc.org • (804) 351-5265