

Pre-Enroll Returning Citizens in SNAP: Support HB 1270

The Issue

- Returning citizens typically do not leave prison/jail to return to a food secure life with a good-paying job waiting for them.
 - o This leaves them especially vulnerable to recidivate immediately after release.
- SNAP applications are processed within 30 days (7 days for expedited cases).
 - o For individuals with no means to meet their basic needs, this is a lifetime.
- Thus, this is a perfect storm for returning citizens.

The Solution

- Pre-enroll returning citizens in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) in the final month of their sentence.
- SNAP opens them up to two benefits:
 - o Food access
 - o Employment and Training opportunities
 - Formerly incarcerated individuals often identify employment as one of the most important issues in transitioning back into the community and avoiding future criminal activity.¹
 - However, many face multifaceted barriers to employment, particularly with regard to quality work with potential for future earnings growth.
 - For those with limited education, scant work experience, and weak professional skills, leveraging SNAP's E&T program to provide robust services could help them get on a path to sustainable employment.
 - The DMV Connect Program shows that giving returning citizens the tools they need to succeed outside of prison/jail reduces recidivism².

VOTE YES ON HB 1270

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¹ <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL34287.pdf>.

² <https://vadoc.virginia.gov/media/1676/vadoc-recidivism-dmv-connect-program-may-2021.pdf>