

## **SUPPORT: Increase SNAP Minimum Benefit for Seniors**

**Senate Item 324 #4s & House Item 324 #7h | FY25 \$12.3M GF; FY26 \$12M GF**

**Increase the minimum SNAP benefit for eligible seniors 60+ from \$23 to \$50/month.**

### **What this budget amendment does:**

- Ensures that all senior SNAP participants receive at least \$50/month in SNAP benefits.
- Provides seniors with additional resources to afford nutritional foods needed to help control and prevent diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

### **Why is this budget amendment needed?**

- Only 38% of eligible seniors in Virginia participate in SNAP. Many do not participate due to only qualifying for the federal minimum benefit of \$23/month.
- Sufficient SNAP benefits allow low-income older adults to live independently in their communities and avoid costly hospitalizations or nursing homes.
- Elderly SNAP participants will be less likely to forgo needed medications.<sup>1</sup>
- While SNAP medical deductions can increase seniors' benefit amount, there is no deduction for medically-advised dietary needs — increasing the SNAP allotment could save seniors AND the Commonwealth money in healthcare costs.

**"[My mother] was approved for \$23 a month, which I thought was funny - I thought it was a joke. I mean...I can barely - \$23 is barely enough for a week."**

*Mary and Deborah Pohlig,  
senior SNAP recipient  
(Hanover County)*

### **The numbers:**

- Over 100,000 seniors in Virginia rely on SNAP benefits.
- Seniors lost over \$258 in monthly SNAP benefits after Emergency Allotments ended in March 2023.
- Food prices increased 23.5% from 2020 to 2023.
- The minimum benefit for a one- to two-person household is \$23; the USDA's Thrifty Food Plan estimates the cost of food for two people is over \$400/month.
- Every dollar spent with SNAP benefits generates \$1.54 in economic activity.<sup>2</sup>

1. Carlson, Steven and Llobrera, Joseph. SNAP is Linked With Improved Health Outcomes and Lower Health Care Costs, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, January 2023.

2. Canning, Patrick and Brian Stacy. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier, ERR-265, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, July 2019.