



**Sponsor Testimony regarding H. B. No. 288 - Fund SNAP, TANF,
and WIC upon a lapse in federal funding Before the House Families
and Aging Committee
May 9, 2024**

Thank you chair Schmidt, Vice-Chair Miller, and Ranking Member Denson for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony today.

I also want to thank my dear friend and Joint Sponsor, Representative Humphrey for her leadership on this bill and these issues.

When the federal government shuts down, it takes away the ability of many Ohioans to meet their nutritional needs with it, exacerbating food insecurity statewide. Almost 2 million Ohioans rely on federal funding for food aid.

HB 288 is a simple bill. It authorizes the administration to use Ohio's Rainy-Day Fund (the Budget Stabilization Fund) to cover the federal share of critical food and nutrition programs should the Federal Government fail to provide its share of these programs.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program provide benefits that Ohioans simply cannot afford to lose.

SNAP helps eligible low-income households afford nutritionally adequate low-cost diets by increasing their food purchasing power. In September 2021, more than 1.5 million Ohio residents (13% of the population) received SNAP benefits.

WIC combats infant mortality and early childhood malnutrition by providing low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women and nutritionally at-risk infants and children up to age five with supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education. In Ohio, almost 200,000 women and children rely on WIC to meet their daily nutritional needs.

TANF provides cash assistance and supportive services to assist families with children under age 18. In 2020, more than 97,000 Ohioans rely on the TANF program. 86,400 were children.

WIC and SNAP are 100% federally funded, while TANF receives approximately \$60 million a month in federal funding. During the 2018-2019 shutdown, the USDA was able to secure funds to support WIC and SNAP, though they were in danger of falling short if the shutdown had lasted any longer.

Our legislation reassures the millions of Ohioans who depend on SNAP, WIC, and TANF that we have their backs if federal funding falls through.

While we are not currently facing a threat of a federal lapse of funding until at least October 1st of this year, we know that even the threat of a shutdown for these critical food programs can cause tremendous stress and upheaval for beneficiaries and non-profits who are at the mercy of Congressional action.

Historically, every time we are faced with a shutdown or a possible shutdown, the federal government has committed to making states whole should there be arrears in food aid funding.

In the end, should we have to use the Rainy-Day fund, the only cost to the Ohio taxpayer is the interest lost on the Rainy Day Fund for the - hopefully - brief time during a lapse of funding.

In return, our children, new mothers, and extreme poor will have food security.

Thank you. I'm happy to answer any questions.