



Ohio House Community Revitalization Committee
Chairman Click
Hope Lane-Gavin, Director of Nutrition Policy and Programs
May 13, 2025
House Bill 178

Chairman Click, Vice Chairwoman Mullins, Ranking Member Brewer and members of the House Community Revitalization Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today as a proponent of House Bill 178. My name is Hope Lane-Gavin and I serve as the Director of Nutrition Policy and Programs with the Ohio Association of Foodbanks. We represent Ohio's statewide hunger relief network, including 12 regional foodbanks and 3,600 local food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and feeding sites in all 88 counties.

About 3.4 million Ohioans live in households eligible for food from our network because their incomes are below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Currently, we are providing take-home groceries to more than 450,000 families each month on average and about 1.5 million prepared meals each month on average through shelters, hot meal sites, kids cafes, and other supplemental feeding sites. One in five food pantry visitors we serve are older Ohioans over the age of 60.

Many people that turn to our charitable network for help are not poor enough to qualify for SNAP. Others do qualify for SNAP, but their benefit amount does not always stretch far enough to meet their basic food needs, particularly with national inflation putting pressure on budgets.

While the average SNAP benefit in Ohio is \$171 per month per person (or less than \$6 per person, per day), the federal minimum SNAP benefit is just \$23 a month for 1- and 2-person households. While the SNAP benefit calculation itself depends on a myriad of things including household size and income, it does not consider other common expenses to meet basic needs such as transportation, insurance, and other out-of-pocket costs.

As the fiscal note outlines, research demonstrates there are about 70,000 Ohio 1-2 person households headed by an adult 60 or older receiving less than \$50 in benefits per month. Including at least 56,000 receiving the minimum benefit of \$23 per month. Qualitative and quantitative studies, including a series of interviews we conducted with older adults, have demonstrated that older adults who are food insecure have diets that are less nutritious, experience worse health outcomes, and have a higher risk for depression than those with enough food. Access to SNAP benefits can reduce food insecurity, increase medication adherence and contribute to health care savings. The passage of House Bill 178 would provide a modest boost in benefits for 70,000 older adult households at a time when they are struggling with high costs for food and housing. Foodbanks are experiencing reduced access to federal commodities and Am. Sub. House Bill 96 currently reduces funding for state food purchase programs by \$7.5 million, or 23 percent, per year.





Our network is not positioned to make up for the growing shortfalls that households with fixed incomes are experiencing due to inflation. House Bill 178 would provide meaningful, direct relief to seniors with very low incomes at heightened risk for food insecurity.

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks thanks bill sponsors Representative Troy and Representative Williams for bringing this legislation forward for your consideration. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

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