



Advocates for Ohio's Future

Proponent Testimony

Ohio House Community Revitalization Committee

HB 178, Establish a supplemental benefit allotment for SNAP recipients

May 13, 2025

Chair Click, Vice Chair Mullins, Ranking Member Brewer, and members of the House Community Revitalization Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 178. My name is Sarah Hudacek and I am the Coalition Manager of Advocates for Ohio's Future. Advocates for Ohio's Future (AOF) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of state and local health and human services policy, advocacy and provider organizations that strive to strengthen families and communities through health, human services, and early care & education.

In Ohio, older adult food insecurity has been steadily increasing. Over the decade leading up to the pandemic, visits to food pantries by older Ohioans increased by 107 percent. Just since 2019, Ohio foodbanks are now serving 70 percent more older adults than 6 years ago.

Despite this increase in need, only 50 percent of older Ohioans eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are participating in SNAP, which can likely be attributed to a number of barriers, including mobility, lack of transportation, stigma, and benefit inadequacy. The current federal minimum SNAP benefit is just \$23 per month. Today, 70,000 older adult households in Ohio are receiving that small \$23 per month allotment.

AOF was founded 15 years ago with the recognition that Ohioans don't live their lives in siloes and that unaddressed needs will follow a person throughout their life span. Food is the most basic need for all of us, and older adults can fall into crisis if, after a lifetime of hard work, they turn 60 and face a world of higher costs from every angle - increased housing costs, utility costs, medical costs, and overall increasing cost of living.

When faced with a food budget that has been eroded by a 25 percent increase in grocery prices over the last four years, older adults on fixed incomes turn to foodbanks and food pantries, and also begin to make dangerous trade-offs, like cutting pills in half, skipping meals, or purchasing cheaper, less healthy food.

Investing in older adult food security through SNAP allows older adults to personalize their grocery carts by choosing the foods they prefer and need for managing chronic diseases. Data also shows that SNAP participants are less likely to enter nursing homes and to have shorter stays if admitted¹, less likely to be hospitalized,² and that even an additional \$10 in SNAP per month has a marked impact on health outcomes.

¹ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28738897/>

² <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1089/pop.2017.0055>

To support older Ohioans through SNAP, House Bill 178 would utilize state funds to increase the minimum benefit for older adult households receiving SNAP to \$50 per month. This modest supplement would ensure that no older Ohioan receives less than \$50 per month. For example, if a household receives \$23 per month, the state would provide an additional \$27 per month. If a household receives \$40 per month, the state would provide an additional \$10 per month.

Advocates for Ohio's Future thanks Representatives Williams and Troy for their leadership on this important issue and asks this committee to favorably report House Bill 178 to help older adults age in place with dignity.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support and for your consideration. I am happy to answer questions you may have via email at shudacek@communitysolutions.com.

Advocates for Ohio's Future
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