



**Ohio Senate Workforce Development Committee
Senate Resolution 29
Urge Congress to Replace Stolen SNAP Benefits
Matt Habash, President/CEO Mid-Ohio Food Collective
April 1, 2025**

Chair Koehler, Vice Chair Reynolds and Ranking Minority Member Ingram and members of the Committee, I am Matt Habash, President and CEO of Mid-Ohio Food Collective. Today, I am submitting this written testimony in support of Senate Resolution 29, urging Congress to replace stolen SNAP benefits.

Mid-Ohio Food Collective is the largest food relief agency in Ohio and one of the largest in the nation, serving 20 urban, rural and Appalachian counties from Chillicothe to Marion and Marysville to Belmont, including Columbus. To give you some context of our work to connect nutritious food to those who are struggling, last fiscal year Mid-Ohio Food Collective distributed nearly 85 million pounds of food – enough for over 193,000 meals every day, serving more than 500,000 children, seniors, veterans, disabled and others facing food insecurity.

First, thank you to Senator Schaffer for introducing this Resolution and to Senators Blackshear, Smith and Craig for signing on as co-sponsors. The Resolution urges Congress to resume restoration of stolen Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. There has been a devastating increase in SNAP benefit theft, most often through skimming. Ohio has seen 27,000-plus such thefts, resulting in the loss of over \$14 million in benefits.

And the practice continues into 2025. But, since reimbursements have ended, there is a lack of data to track theft claims, making it difficult to know where thefts are being targeted. Which in turn makes it difficult to prosecute thieves and to prevent such cases from occurring in the first place.

Unfortunately, the Congressional replacement of stolen benefits stopped for beneficiaries in 2024, leaving vulnerable citizens to truly wonder where their next meal will come from. This is particularly impactful in the current economic climate as inflation and other factors are driving an increase in food insecurity. Mid-Ohio Food Collective has seen a 6.5 percent increase in service visits across our footprint and our application assistance team has assisted 4,414 customers with SNAP applications.

SNAP truly is the front line of defense against hunger, providing 90 percent of meals for hunger relief, and the loss of benefits we have seen through these thefts is devastating. Organizations such as MOFC provide the remaining food for hunger relief and often become the last resort for those who have had their benefits stolen.

We also applaud language in the Resolution urging Congress to address anti-theft measures, such as the inclusion of chips in SNAP benefit cards. We need to make whole those who have lost benefits and take proactive steps to prevent such future loss.

We, along with the Ohio Association of Foodbanks and other anti-hunger advocates, urge the committee to pass Senate Resolution 29 and urge Congress to act on this critical issue, to ensure our neighbors have access to needed nutritious food.

As always, we are happy to provide additional insight into this issue and our operations for any member who would like to learn more. We also urge Committee Members to visit their local food bank or pantries to learn firsthand about hunger in our communities. Thank you for your time and consideration and please reach out with any questions. We appreciate your careful consideration of Senate Resolution 29 to support a hunger-free, healthier Ohio.

Thank you,

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