

# Local Matters

PARTNERING for HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

## Ohio Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee

Senator Kristina Roegner, Chair  
Senator Rob McColley, Vice Chair  
Senator Hearcel Craig, Ranking Member

### Opponent Testimony on Senate Bill 17

Regards eligibility for SNAP, Medicaid, and unemployment  
Michelle Moskowitz Brown, Local Matters

February 22, 2021

Chairwoman Roegner, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the committee:

Local Matters, a food education and access nonprofit in Central Ohio, opposes the passage of Senate Bill 17. This testimony focuses on the SNAP-related provisions of the proposed legislation.

Senate Bill 17 does not achieve what it claims as a goal: prioritize and protect the needy. SNAP works best when it is inclusive and robust, not restricted and cumbersome. It is good for the economy, as it helps people in Ohio shop at local supermarkets and other food outlets, such as mobile markets and farmers markets. Moody's Analytics estimates that even in a weak economy, \$1 in SNAP benefits generates \$1.70 in economic activity. Beyond economic benefits, SNAP shields children from some of the harshest effects of poverty.

Local Matters opposes SB17 because we have seen the far-reaching success of SNAP and associated nutrition incentive programs, like Produce Perks (which provides a \$25 match on SNAP/EBT and P-EBT purchases). Local Matters' Veggie Van is a mobile market that works with churches, health care centers, and schools to increase affordable and convenient access to fruit, vegetables, and staple foods where full-scale for-profit grocery stores do not operate. Our customer base is largely low-income and SNAP-eligible. When the pandemic hit, we saw sales increase by over 500%. People want good, safe food for their family.

Last spring, shoppers like Kaci Harris, a mother of five, turned to Veggie Van as a safe way to use their SNAP dollars. Once she heard about the service, Kaci was relieved that she could access food saying, "I now know... we can get produce. I can go get produce and feel so good about it. I feel safe." If SB17 is passed, parents like Kaci would need to take precious time away from caring for their family to navigate the complicated proposed changes in the SNAP reporting system.

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Considering all the burdens low-resourced families face, SB17 is a poor use of taxpayer dollars on additional regulation, and it is a restriction on individual freedom – the freedom to do your best for your family, without the burdens of severe asset-restrictions and additional reporting.

Thank you for standing up to protect the resources that support Ohioans feed their families when they need it most and opposing Senate Bill 17.

Testimony submitted by:

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*Local Matters is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in Central Ohio working to build healthy communities through food education, access, and advocacy.*