



February 23, 2021

Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee  
Ohio State Legislature  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

**Re: SB17- Eligibility for SNAP, Medicaid, and Unemployment**

Chairman Roegner; Members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee:

United Food and Commercial Workers<sup>i</sup> (UFCW) Locals 75, 880 and 1059 submit this written testimony in opposition to SB17, which will drastically reduce access to safe and nutritious food for struggling Ohio families. Together, we represent over 80,000 workers in the grocery store, pharmacy, retail, manufacturing, and healthcare industries in Ohio. Our grocery store members are seasoned professionals who process SNAP transactions every day and some benefit from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SB17 will do more harm than good, especially during a time when many Ohioans are struggling to put food on the table because they have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

SB17 would prohibit the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services from considering for eligibility of SNAP benefits, families that are already determined eligible for other means-tested benefit programs (categorical eligibility) such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Such prohibition would counter the designed impact of categorical eligibility, which is to offer a streamlined process for assistance to those working but still near poverty and those saving modestly in order to become more economically independent. Working families would be among the most impacted by this change.

In addition to eligibility and income restrictions, we also oppose language in the bill that would require individuals receiving SNAP benefits to have a photograph on their benefit card. SB17 would require at least one adult member of the household to have their picture on the front of the card. SNAP benefits are designed to be used by the entire household not just the head of the household. SB17 does not create a process or protection when another member of the household, not the beneficiary named or photographed on the card, tries to legally use the card.

Federal regulation prohibits retailers from treating SNAP customers differently from other customers, so retailers would have to ask for photo ID for everyone. This is a great concern to our members in the grocery stores who fear that such an implementation will cause longer lines and create a liability issue for store clerks who forget to ask for ID.

We believe that working families in Ohio deserve to keep their SNAP benefits, especially during the current health and economic crisis that our nation is facing. UFCW Local 75, 880, and 1059 urge you to oppose SB17, because it will hurt the working families in Ohio.

Sincerely,

**Kevin Garvey**

Local 75 President

**Carl Ivka**

Local 880 President

**Randy Quickel**

Local 1059 President

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<sup>i</sup> UFCW International is the largest private sector union in the United States. UFCW International represents 1.3 million professionals and their families in healthcare, grocery stores, meatpacking, food processing, retail shops and other industries. Our members serve our communities in all 50 states, Canada, and Puerto Rico. Learn more about the UFCW at [ufcw.org](https://www.ufcw.org).