

# DURHAM BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

## *Resolution*

### **A JOINT RESOLUTION SUPPORTING SNAP AND OTHER FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS**

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina is the 8th hungriest state in the nation. While average monthly SNAP benefits are nominal, about \$119 per household in North Carolina, the program is vital to helping people access nutritious food; and Durham County is the fourth most expensive county to live in North Carolina and is only growing more expensive. Even with more than 1.5 million North Carolinians (15% of the state's population) relying on SNAP to pay for their groceries, food insecurity still persists across the state. With 1 in 6 people facing the double burden of poverty and food insecurity, SNAP provides a critical safety net for those in need; and

**WHEREAS**, SNAP helps the most vulnerable in our state including households with children, seniors, or people with disabilities. In Durham County, 38,373 participants receive SNAP benefits. While 16.7% (106,210) of Durham County residents are food insecure, 26.6% (28,210) are children under age 18 and 58% (40,354) of the children in Durham receive free/reduced school meals. Of the adults over age 18, 73.4% (78,000) are food insecure. About half of SNAP recipients are employed yet still struggle to make ends meet; and

**WHEREAS**, SNAP helps those most vulnerable. In Durham County, SNAP benefits are provided predominantly to households with children, seniors, or people with disabilities. About half of those receiving SNAP benefits are employed; and

**WHEREAS**, SNAP participation is shown to improve nutrition and promote positive long-term health outcomes. Participation for six months can increase food security in a household by up to 10%. Furthermore, individuals who had access to food stamps in early childhood have a lower risk of obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes as adults. Additionally, access to SNAP is associated with increased utilization of preventative care, which can contribute to lower overall healthcare costs. A national level study found that SNAP participation was associated with a \$1400 reduction, per household, in yearly healthcare expenditures<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, SNAP improves the state's economy. In 2016, SNAP benefits contributed \$2.2 billion to North Carolina's economy. These economic benefits were especially impactful in the agricultural and retail sectors. In Durham County, innovative programs such as Farmer's Market Double Bucks program allow SNAP participants to access nutrition and improve the local economy; over \$55,000 of SNAP/Double Bucks was spent on nutritious foods at Durham Farmers' Market since its inception in 2014. Research from Moody's Analytics show that for every dollar spent on SNAP, \$1.70 is put back into the U.S. economy. Furthermore, each year from 2009-2012, SNAP benefits helped keep 338,000 North Carolinians out of poverty, including 150,000 children. SNAP dollars encourage economic growth by supporting grocers, paying workers, and increasing the purchase of goods. SNAP allows families to participate in their local economies and helps to make our communities stronger; and

**WHEREAS**, SNAP is effective and efficient. SNAP's entitlement structure allows the program to expand in times of greater need, such as the 2008 recession, and contract in times of economic prosperity. Furthermore, every penny of monthly SNAP benefits for North Carolinians comes from the federal government, and the state of North Carolina is only responsible for half of the administrative costs of the program. The SNAP program therefore brings in billion dollars of economic activity for North Carolina, with little input at the state level. SNAP also has one of the most rigorous quality control systems of any public benefit program, which results in low frequency of fraud or abuse.

**WHEREAS**, Funding for SNAP benefits must be maintained and expanded to preserve health and well-being for our community's most vulnerable residents.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that we the members of the Durham County Board of Commissioners, Durham County Social Services Board and Durham County's Board of Public Health do respectfully ask Senator Burr, Senator Tillis and Congressman Butterfield and Congressman Price to reject any proposals in the 2018 Farm Bill that cut funding to SNAP or other federal nutrition programs; shift costs to the states; or otherwise reduce benefits affecting low-income families, workers, children, the unemployed, or the elderly.

This the 12<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2018.

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Wendy Jacobs, Chair, Durham County Board of Commissioners

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Tara Fikes, Chair, Durham County Social Services Board

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Dr. F. Vincent Allison, III, Chair, Durham Board of Public Health

