



## House Bill 3 Would Take Away Access to Food for Struggling Kids and Families

### Background

The Supplementation Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) works by giving a helping hand during rough patches when people need it most. The average new household stays on SNAP for less than a year and most leave the program within two years.

Most SNAP participants who can work, do work. Eighty percent of adults who participate in SNAP in a typical month work either that month or within a year of that month of participation. 87 percent of households with children and a non-disabled adult included at least one member who worked in this period.

There are already strict work requirements to receive SNAP benefits. Out-of-work, able-bodied, childless adults who receive SNAP are only allowed to receive benefits for three months out of a 36-month timeframe.

More than 68% of SNAP participants in Kentucky are in families with children. Almost 38% are in families with members who are elderly or have disabilities. SNAP kept 164,000 people out of poverty in Kentucky, including 73,000 children, on average per year between 2009 and 2012.

For each meal the Feeding America network of food banks provides, SNAP provides 12. Kentucky's food banks are not equipped to handle the increased need for food assistance if SNAP benefits are cut.

### HB 3 Hurts Kentucky Kids and Families

- HB 3 takes away modest food assistance received by the parents of children over the age of five. Recipients would need to participate in "workfare" – essentially an unpaid internship – if they are not already working at least 20 hours a week. Workfare has not been shown to be effective in moving families to self-sufficiency.
- HB 3 requires the state to include a photo on SNAP cards, costing the state millions to purchase equipment, train employees and establish a photo surveillance system that would be distributed to each SNAP retailer in the state. HB 3 triggers a federal law that would require all SNAP-approved grocery stores to ask for photo ID from anyone paying with a credit or bank card.
- HB 3 contains a requirement for any person with a criminal history involving substance abuse pay for a drug test prior to becoming eligible for SNAP. If people are already poor enough to be eligible for the programs, it is likely paying for a drug test up front would present a high hurdle. And because the state will reimburse the applicant after a negative test, and public assistance participants do not have higher rates of drug use, the costs to the state would be great.

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