

Alaska State Senate

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SPONSOR STATEMENT

SB 13: SUMMER EBT BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN

Version N

February 5, 2025

"An Act relating to the summer electronic benefits transfer program for children."

When the school year comes to an end each summer, children from low-income households lose access to the consistent and reliable school meals that they rely on. The Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (Summer EBT) for children program is a federal program that was designed in order address summer hunger throughout the country by providing \$40 per summer month per child in low-income families to be used for food assistance.

Beyond simply ensuring that Alaskan children have access to food, an analysis by the USDA looking at SNAP benefits shows that every dollar that is spent during an economic downturn on SNAP actually generates between \$1.50 and \$1.80 in local economic activity. For our state, that would be an expected economic impact between \$10,440,000 and \$12,528,000 from Summer EBT benefits for the summer of 2025.

This program would go especially far in serving urban Alaskans. Last year, the State of Alaska declined to participate in the federal Summer EBT program, leaving the estimated 58,000 children who would be eligible to receive these benefits without this option.

USDA evaluations have shown that Summer EBT decreased the number of kids with very low food security by one-third; increased whole grain, dairy, fruit, and vegetable consumption; and decreased sugar-sweetened beverage consumption.

To help assure that at-risk children have food on the table, the Department of Education should take the opportunity to apply for the federal funds that are available for the Summer EBT program. Through SB 13, we can provide hunger relief for children from food insecure families across the state and ensure the health and well-being of the young people of Alaska.