

HB196 written testimony

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Thu 5/2/2024 10:42 AM

To:House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

AARP supports implementing broad-based categorical eligibility which this bill implements because it is associated with higher participation in SNAP among adults age 60 or older.

At AARP, our mission is simply to enhance the quality of life for all as we age so we can all choose how we live as we age. Nutrition is foundational for that mission.

“Research shows that SNAP enrollment among older adults is associated with fewer hospital and emergency room visits and long-term care admissions” (Seth Berkowitz *et al.*, “*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation and Health Care Use in Older Adults*,” *Annals of Internal Medicine* 174, no. 12 (December 2021): 1674, 1682, <https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.7326/M21-1588>).

However, in 2018, more than 70 percent of American adults ages 60 and older who were estimated to be eligible for SNAP did not participate in the program nationwide. Efforts to increase SNAP enrollment among eligible older adults are important, because nutrition plays an critical role in healthy aging.

Many of our Alaska AARP members are on low and/or fixed incomes, including 14% who rely on Social Security for 90% or more of their monthly income and 40% for whom 50% or more of their income is from Social Security. Removing the asset test will help encourage senior households with modest savings or assets to apply for SNAP and they will qualify for the assistance they need, while reducing the administrative burden on the State.

We urge you to move this bill forward for passage this session.

Thank you,

Marge Stoneking

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SUPPORT for HB196 Food Stamp Program Eligibility :: Alaska Regional Coalition

Jordan Marshall <jm@jordanmarshallalaska.com>

Mon 5/6/2024 2:50 PM

To:House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

Dear House Finance Committee:

The Alaska Regional Coalition offers its full SUPPORT for **HB196 Food Stamp Program Eligibility**. ARC appreciates that the committee has given HB196 two previous hearings and respectfully requests that the committee advance the bill with enough time for consideration on the House Floor and transmittal to the other body to meet up with its companion in Senate Finance.

HB196 simplifies the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application process by eliminating the asset test and raising income limits for certain households. Using Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) would streamline eligibility, reduce administrative burdens, and expand access to critical food assistance for low-income Alaskans, including working families, people with disabilities, seniors, and individuals experiencing food insecurity. HB196 can empower individuals to save money and build assets without jeopardizing their SNAP eligibility, with stepdown benefits as people increase their income.

The Alaska Regional Coalition is a consortium of four Alaska Native regional tribal nonprofits and two regional tribes – Tanana Chiefs Conference, Maniilaq, Kawerak, Chugachmiut, Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, and Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. We are all recognized by the U.S. Indian Self-Determination Act to provide medical, behavioral, social, public safety, workforce development, and judicial supports to the State of Alaska through contracts, compacts, and grants. The coalition represents 70,000 Alaskans and 109 communities from Ketchikan to Kotzebue.

Respectfully,

Jordan Marshall

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