



Alaska Food Policy Council

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Evie Witten, *Anchorage*

November 3, 2023

Subject: Appreciation and Support for HB 196 and SB 149

Dear Representative Mina and Senator Giessel,

I am writing on behalf of the Alaska Food Policy Council to express our heartfelt appreciation for your unwavering dedication to addressing the critical issues of food security and nutrition in Alaska. We commend your proactive approach in introducing House Bill 196 (HB 196) and Senate Bill 149 (SB 149), which advocate for the implementation of Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in our state.

The Alaska Food Policy Council has a deep understanding of the unique challenges faced by Alaskan communities and are committed to developing evidence-based strategies that promote food security, Alaskan agriculture, and equitable access to nutritious food. The implementation of BBCE, as outlined in HB 196 and SB 149, aligns with our organization's vision for a more resilient and food secure Alaska. By simplifying the SNAP application process and ensuring access to vital nutritional support for vulnerable populations, these bills not only improve the lives of Alaskan residents but also offer substantial benefits to the state. The streamlined process would lead to significant cost savings and enhanced efficiency for the Division of Public Assistance, allowing resources to be allocated more effectively, ultimately benefiting both the government and the citizens it serves.

AFPC stands in full support of HB 196 and SB 149, and we applaud your leadership and tireless advocacy. We will continue to follow these bills and work to support your efforts. If we can provide additional information to help you move these bills forward, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to the positive changes that these bills will bring to Alaska.

Kind regards,

Robbi Mixon

Executive Director, Alaska Food Policy Council

19 October 2023

Re: HB 196 and SB 149
Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility



Dear Senator Giessel and Representative Mina:

Thank you for introducing HB 196 and SB 149 to implement Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which allows states to eliminate the asset test and raise the gross income eligibility limits for certain households.

Options under BBCE will provide targeted assistance for low income working families. Raising the gross income limit primarily benefits working families with children, as they are more likely to have competing expenses like childcare, housing, and utilities, leaving them unable to afford the necessary foods for a healthy diet, a critical element of child development. Removing the asset test helps households with modest savings or assets still qualify for the assistance they need, while reducing the administrative burden on the State.

This legislation comes at a time that food costs are climbing, with nearly a third of children nationwide affected. The Kids Count Alaska 2022 report found that 11% of children in Alaska are facing food insecurity, with much higher rates in off the road system regions, such as Bethel, Skagway, and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Census Area. Continuous access to resources, such as SNAP, reduces stress in families and acts as a prevention factor to child abuse and neglect. SNAP is a crucial program that helps Alaska's prevention ecosystem to meet the need.

For these reasons, we support HB196 and SB149 to reduce hunger in Alaska, eliminate administrative burdens on the Division of Public Assistance, and save the state money.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "TJ Storrs", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Trevor J. Storrs
President/CEO
Alaska Children's Trust

Susan Anderson, *Chair*
Margo Bellamy, *Treasurer*
Tlisa Northcutt, *Secretary*
Mike Hanley, *Past Chair*
Ginger Baim
Gregory Deal
Reggie Joule
José Luis Martinez
Ivy Spohnholz
Lael Oldmixon
Jessica Ullrich
Diane Gubatayao
Lisa Rieger



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January 8, 2023

Rep Genevieve Mina
Alaska Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: HB196 Support

Dear Representative Mina:

In 2020, nearly 9.5 million adults age 50 and older lacked consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life due to inadequate financial resources. Older adults may face life challenges as they age such as experiencing unexpected or high health care costs, job loss, or the death of a spouse or other loved one. This may result in financial instability and make it difficult to afford food.

Food insecurity has significant negative impacts on older adults, particularly on their health. Older adults who are food-insecure are more likely than their food-secure counterparts to have limitations on activities of daily living, have conditions like diabetes and depression, and experience heart attacks.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as the nation's largest domestic nutrition assistance program provides financial assistance to eligible individuals and families with low incomes to purchase food, including over sixteen thousand Alaskan SNAP households with adults 50+ in 2019, half of which are 60 and over. SNAP households with 50+ Alaskans have an average monthly income of \$1,039 with 75% of them falling below the federal poverty level.

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, and has been in place for more than 20 years in many states.

AARP Alaska supports HB196 to protect the food and financial security of aging Alaskans. On behalf of the fastest growing senior population in the nation and our 77,000 AARP Alaska members, and for the benefit of all Alaskans, we thank you for your leadership on this important issue for older Alaskans.

Respectfully, Marge Stoneking
Advocacy Director, AARP Alaska





October 27, 2023

Senator Giessel
Representative Mina
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK

RE: HB196/SB149 - SUPPORT

Dear Representative Mina and Senator Giessel,

On behalf of the American Heart Association, thank you for introducing HB196 and SB149 to implement Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These bills will allow states to eliminate the asset test and raise the gross income eligibility limits for certain households.

Options under BBCE will provide targeted assistance for low income working families and seniors. Raising the gross income limit primarily benefits working families with children, as they are more likely to have competing expenses like childcare, housing, and utilities, leaving them unable to afford the necessary foods for a healthy diet. Removing the asset test also helps households – often seniors – with modest savings or assets still qualify for the assistance they need, while reducing the administrative burden on the State.

SNAP participation is estimated to reduce the likelihood of a household being food insecure. States that have adopted SNAP-supportive policies, like broad based categorical eligibility, generally have more SNAP-eligible participation than do states without these policies. Policies that make SNAP easier to access increase participation in the program, food insecurity is reduced, and fewer children and families go hungry.

This legislation comes at a time that food insecurity levels are already elevated. SNAP is a crucial program that helps Alaska's anti-hunger network to meet the need. It is for the abovementioned reasons we support HB196 and SB149 to reduce hunger in Alaska, eliminate administrative burdens on the Division of Public Assistance, and save the state money.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Morgan".

Jamie Morgan
Sr. Region Lead, Government Relations

Robin Dempsey



Catholic Social Services

4600 Debarr Road, Suite 201, Anchorage, AK 99508 • (907) 222-7300 • Fax (907) 258-1091 • cssalaska.org

3rd Avenue Resource &
Navigation Center

Brother Francis Shelter

Clare House

Complex Care

Family Disability Services

Homeless Family Services

Refugee Assistance &
Immigration Services

Alaska Office for Refugees

St. Francis House Food Pantry

Supportive Family Services

Dear Representative Mina and Senator Giessel,

I am writing on behalf of Catholic Social Services (CSS) to express our strong support for H.B. 196 and S.B. 149, which aim to implement Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Catholic Social Services is dedicated to supporting vulnerable Alaskans on the path to permanent stability. Annually, we assist over 10,000 children, families, and individuals through various programs, including St. Francis House, one of the largest food pantries in the state.

Since our establishment in 1966, we've worked to combat hunger in our community, and in recent years we've observed a continued rise in food insecurity. When vulnerable Alaskans are unable to access SNAP, they turn to vital services like St. Francis House. Since January 2023, St. Francis House has provided food to over 1,200 new households, with more than 120 households served daily, marking an unprecedented demand. Hunger is a pressing reality in our community, and implementing BBCE for SNAP is a vital step in meeting this urgent need.

BBCE expands SNAP access, primarily benefiting working families struggling with the costs of childcare, housing, and utilities. The simultaneous removal of the asset test alleviates the extensive administrative burden on the Division of Public Assistance. These asset tests penalize families striving to increase income and savings—crucial steps toward self-sufficiency. Eliminating this test empowers families to build assets and is particularly beneficial for seniors, who often rely on essential savings.

Thank you for the introduction of HB 196 and SB 149 to implement Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE). We wholeheartedly support this legislation and anticipate Alaska joining the 44 other states already utilizing BBCE in their anti-hunger efforts.

Sincerely,
Robin Dempsey

Letter in Support of HB 196 / SB 149

"An Act relating to the supplemental nutrition assistance program; and providing for an effective date."

Representative Mina and Senator Giessel,

On behalf of Instacart, this letter is to express our support for HB 196 and SB 149 - implementing Broad Based Categorical Eligibility for SNAP.

The Alaska State Legislature is taking great strides to help alleviate food insecurity across the state by introducing HB 196 and SB 149. This action empowers the Division of Public Assistance to implement cost-effective measures while ensuring more families can access the food and supplies they need.

For the past decade, Instacart has harnessed the power of technology to provide fresh grocery delivery and pick-up to families across all 50 states and DC, reaching more than 95% of US households, including 90% of households experiencing food insecurity. We're proud to be the first online grocery marketplace to accept EBT SNAP in all 50 states. Everyone deserves access to food, and that's why we support efforts to modernize nutrition assistance programs like SNAP, which extend a lifeline to food insecure households.

HB 196 and SB 149 will implement the broad-based categorical eligibility, which will eliminate the asset test and raise the gross income eligibility limits for many households. This will help food insecure populations, particularly seniors and families with children, receive uninterrupted access to SNAP while reducing administrative costs for the state. Children in particular face long-term health consequences from a lack of reliable nutrition, such as iron deficiency, anemia, asthma, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease.¹

Instacart is proud to partner with the Food Bank of Alaska to advocate for this legislation, as we know food banks play a vital role in ensuring our most vulnerable community members don't go hungry. We also work with food banks like the Food Bank of Alaska to leverage our technology and our reach to help address food and nutrition insecurity on a local level. Last year we launched [Community Carts](#), a service which reimagines traditional food drives by allowing people to donate and deliver most-needed items to local food banks through the Instacart platform. Alaskans rely on the Food Bank of Alaska and many other food pantries, and unfortunately, needs vastly outweigh available resources due in part to the rise of inflation. This legislation comes at a critical time, and speedy passage would deliver much-needed relief to many Alaskans.

For these reasons, we support HB 196 and SB 149 to reduce hunger in Alaska and eliminate administrative burdens on the Division of Public Assistance. We look forward to continuing this important work on expanding food access for Alaskans in a smart and efficient manner.

Sincerely,

Tiffani Alvidrez
Regional Policy Manager, West
Instacart

¹ <https://www.nokidhungry.org/blog/five-things-know-about-summer-hunger-united-states>

Bread Line, Inc.

PO Box 73715

Fairbanks, AK 99707

907.452.1974

breadlineak.org



Stone Soup Cafe · Stone's Throw Job Training · Stone Soup Garden · Kids Cafe

"feeding people & affirming lives"

October 12, 2023

Dear Representative Mina & Senator Giessel,

Thank you both for introducing HB 196 & SB 149. Your respective bills help move Alaska forward in starting Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps).

This targeted assistance, focusing on low-income working families & seniors, will protect vulnerable Alaskan households from facing preventable hunger. Raising the gross income limit primarily benefits working families with children, as they are more likely to have additional life expenses such as childcare, housing, & utilities, leaving them unable to afford the good food necessary for a healthy diet. Removing the asset test will help Alaskans – often seniors – who have modest savings or other assets remain qualified for the assistance they need. In our industry, the SNAP asset test & gross income eligibility limits are often called the “benefits cliff” – meaning that already struggling Alaskans fall off a metaphoric cliff when they are denied SNAP. We can take better care of our elders & families by joining the 44 other United States in adopting BBCE in Alaska.

When Alaskans who need assistance are not able to receive SNAP, they turn to food banks, pantries & soup kitchens like Bread Line. This legislation comes at a time that food insecurity levels are already high. Since the onset of last year's SNAP backlog, the Bread Line has been serving record numbers of Alaskans while facing diminishing donations for our anti-hunger work. It has been an enormous blow to follow so quick on the heels of a multi-year pandemic. SNAP is a crucial program that helps Alaska's anti-hunger network meet the need where it's at.

You have the Bread Line's full support for HB196 & SB149. Reducing hunger in Alaska, eliminating administrative burdens on the Division of Public Assistance & saving the state money is in all of our best interests. Thank you again for introducing your bills.

Earnestly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hannah C. Hill', is written over the word 'Earnestly'.

Hannah C. Hill

Bread Line, Executive Director

January 8, 2024

Dear Representative Mina and Senator Giessel,

We wish to thank you for introducing HB 196 and SB 149 to implement Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) within SNAP. Congregation Sukkot Shalom, in partnership with the Juneau Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, provides free food for those in need every Saturday during our open food pantry. Over the two and a half years we have been in operation, we have seen significant increases in the number of people coming by to secure food for their families. Some share the frustration they experience with Alaska's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We support this legislation for the following reasons:

- Eliminating the asset test and raising the gross income eligibility limits for certain households will especially benefit the working families with children we see each week.
- Removing the asset tests will also help the seniors with little savings who also come to our pantry to stock up on food for the week.
- Reducing the workload for eligibility technicians at the Division of Public Assistance will make SNAP work better and more efficiently in Alaska.

SNAP is a crucial program that helps Alaska's anti-hunger network made up of volunteers like us. We support your efforts to reduce hunger in Alaska and eliminate administrative burdens on the Division of Public Assistance.

Thank you for your sponsorship of this necessary legislation,

Joyanne Bloom

Libby Bakalar

Shari Paul

Food Pantry Co-Coordinator

Co-President

Co-President

Board Members of Congregation Sukkat Shalom



Dear Representative Mina and Senator Giessel,

Thank you for introducing HB 196 and SB 149 to implement Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which allows states to eliminate the asset test and raise the gross income eligibility limits for certain households.

Options under BBCE will provide targeted assistance for low income working families and seniors. Raising the gross income limit primarily benefits working families with children, as they are more likely to have competing expenses like childcare, housing, and utilities, leaving them unable to afford the necessary foods for a healthy diet. Removing the asset test helps households – often seniors – with modest savings or assets still qualify for the assistance they need, while reducing the administrative burden on the State.

Not only have I seen the faces and heard the cries of families who couldn't afford to feed their families, I have experienced those same issues in my own life. When I was offered the job of running the Copper River Native Association Food Bank, I had people telling me that they and their children would not have been able to eat, if it wasn't for the food bank. I have heard my children cry themselves to sleep because they were hungry and there was nothing I could do about it because we didn't even have a can or bag of beans in the cupboard. I promised my children and myself that I would do everything in my power to prevent anyone from having to go through that again. I am keeping my promise by writing to you today.

Many households have old cars in their back property that will never be able to run again. These are included in the current asset tests, usually resulting in either rejection or reduction of SNAP benefits. Even if a household owns a couple of long guns to use of hunting or fishing equipment, these items can be the cause of rejection or reduction of SNAP benefits even though they are being used to help the household become self-sufficient.

When Alaskans needing assistance are not able to receive SNAP, they show up at food banks and pantries like Copper River Basin Resource Council – CRBRC - (formerly known as the Copper River Native Association Food Bank). In fiscal year 2021, CRBRC served over 550 individuals comprising over 250 households. Last fiscal year, we served nearly 850 individuals comprising over 450 households. As you can see, this legislation comes at a time that food insecurity levels are already elevated. SNAP is a crucial program that helps Alaska's anti-hunger network to meet the need.

For these reasons, we support HB196 and SB149 to reduce hunger in Alaska, eliminate administrative burdens on the Division of Public Assistance, and save the state money.

Best,

Irene M. Brooks

Copper River Basin Resource Council

October 18, 2023

Dear Representative Mina and Senator Giessel,

Thank you for introducing HB 196 and SB 149 to implement Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which allows states to eliminate the asset test and raise the gross income eligibility limits for certain households.

Options under BBCE will provide targeted assistance for low income working families and seniors. Raising the gross income limit primarily benefits working families with children, as they are more likely to have competing expenses like childcare, housing, and utilities, leaving them unable to afford the necessary foods for a healthy diet. Removing the asset test helps households – often seniors – with modest savings or assets still qualify for the assistance they need, while reducing the administrative burden on the State.

When Alaskans needing assistance are not able to receive SNAP, they show up at food banks and pantries like **Copper River Basin Resource Council**. This legislation comes at a time that food insecurity levels are already elevated. **We have had about one-quarter of our clientele complain this past year about not having enough money for food because they have not been able to receive SNAP. We serve close to 300 people per month. Many of those folks come in specifically for protein. We were able to supplement the food that we receive from the Food Bank of Alaska by purchasing high cost items such as butter and hamburger. However, that little bit of extra protein is not enough to sustain a family of four for a whole month. There have been a number of families that have come to our Food Bank in tears because their situation has been so dire. When we were able to provide food for them, they were so grateful for the help. Many of our clients have needed to come in more than once a month for food.** SNAP is a crucial program that helps Alaska's anti-hunger network to meet the need.

For these reasons, we support HB196 and SB149 to reduce hunger in Alaska, eliminate administrative burdens on the Division of Public Assistance, and save the state money.

Best,

Michelle LeBlanc

Copper River Basin Resource Council



Girdwood Chapel & Turnagain Community Services
www.girdwoodchapel.com
(907) 783-0127
PO Box 1068 / 102 Heavenly Valley Dr.
Girdwood, AK 99587



November 25, 2023

Dear Representative Mina and Senator Giessel (CC Representative Shaw),

Thank you for introducing HB 196 and SB 149 to implement Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which allows states to eliminate the asset test and raise the gross income eligibility limits for certain households.

Options under BBCE will provide targeted assistance for low income working families and seniors. Raising the gross income limit primarily benefits working families with children, as they are more likely to have competing expenses like childcare, housing, and utilities, leaving them unable to afford the necessary foods for a healthy diet. Removing the asset test helps households – often seniors – with modest savings or assets still qualify for the assistance they need, while reducing the administrative burden on the State.

Here in Girdwood, we are constantly seeing individuals and families at our food pantry who are waiting on delayed SNAP applications, or being bumped off due to seasonal bonuses or cyclical employment. We recently worked with a family earning too much to access SNAP, but living in tents because they couldn't afford rent.

When Alaskans needing assistance are not able to receive SNAP, they show up at food banks and pantries like Girdwood Chapel / Turnagain Community Services. This legislation comes at a time that food insecurity levels are already elevated. We are serving more people each month than in 2022 or even 2021, while facing higher food prices and lower donations. SNAP is a crucial program that helps Alaska's anti-hunger network to meet the need.

For these reasons, we support HB196 and SB149 to reduce hunger in Alaska, eliminate administrative burdens on the Division of Public Assistance, and save the state money.

Sincerely,

Rev. Nico Reijns

Girdwood Chapel and Turnagain Community Services

Love God, Love Others, Change the World

Dear Representative Mina and Senator Giessel,

Thank you for introducing HB 196 and SB 149 to implement Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which allows states to eliminate the asset test and raise the gross income eligibility limits for certain households.

Options under BBCE will provide targeted assistance for low income working families and seniors. Raising the gross income limit primarily benefits working families with children, as they are more likely to have competing expenses like childcare, housing, and utilities, leaving them unable to afford the necessary foods for a healthy diet.

Removing the asset test helps

households – often seniors – with modest savings or assets to still qualify for the assistance they need, while reducing the administrative burden on the State.

Helping Hands Food Bank is located in Tok, Alaska. SNAP is a crucial program that helps Alaska's anti-hunger network to meet the need. For these reasons, we support HB196 and SB149 to reduce hunger in Alaska, eliminate administrative burdens on the Division of Public Assistance, and save the state money. The Board of Helping Hands Food Bank greatly appreciates your support.

I can speak from personal experience as to the great blessing this proposed legislation would bring to Alaskans if it passes. The SNAP program has been such a critical blessing for my family ever since I had to take my 8 children and flee to the Center for Non-Violent Living in Fairbanks, Alaska to protect my children and me from escalating domestic violence from their father and my then-husband. Our family has since relocated to Tok. We are so thankful for the SNAP program!

However, because of the strict rules for household income that do not allow for savings, if we set aside a few savings to cover sudden vehicle expenses, etc. we risk losing our food stamp benefits. As a result, we have had to ask for additional outside assistance many times over the past several years. The incoming child support my family receives is very meager, and with two of my children having turned 18, the child support has dipped down to an amount that does not quite cover our outgoing bills and expenses. Though I have two less children at home, inflation has risen to match this difference. These mentioned expenses do not include money for food. So we still heavily rely on SNAP benefits.

This summer was the date for renewal of our SNAP benefits. I sent in the paperwork before the deadline, but to date I have yet to receive any communication from them on

our case status. Incoming SNAP payments stopped. No explanation for why was provided.

Thankfully, due to learning frugality, we were spending a monthly amount of money on food that was less than what was coming in for us from the program, so we are still living off of the balance on our card. However, when that money runs out soon, the only option I see readily available is to turn to the local Food Bank that I currently volunteer at. Our Helping Hands Food Bank already struggles to find sufficient food supplies for those we currently serve. I worry that as more Alaskans face a hunger crisis from the economic downturn, we will be unable to meet the new demands placed on our food bank. I am hoping that my family can begin receiving SNAP benefits again soon and avoid placing added strain on our local food bank.

Thank you for your time and service,
Elisabeth Garber
907-987-8805
Volunteer, Board Member
Helping Hands Food Bank



Juneau Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

November 24, 2023

Dear Representative Mina and Senator Giessel,

Thank you for introducing HB 196 and SB 149 to implement Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which allows states to eliminate the asset test and raise the gross income eligibility limits for certain households.

Options under BBCE will provide targeted assistance for low income working families and seniors. Raising the gross income limit primarily benefits working families with children, as they are more likely to have competing expenses like childcare, housing, and utilities, leaving them unable to afford the necessary foods for a healthy diet. Removing the asset test helps households – often seniors – with modest savings or assets still qualify for the assistance they need, while reducing the administrative burden on the State.

When Alaskans needing assistance are not able to receive SNAP, they show up at food banks and pantries, such as the Saturday morning food pantry at the local Temple, an interfaith project operated by the Juneau Unitarian Universalist Fellowship and the Congregation Sukkot Shalom. Our pantry opened in May 2021, intending to serve low income families in need who live in the immediate neighborhood. In the last year, with the closure of Helping Hands, we have become a regular stop for people coming from all over Juneau and Douglas. We are completely staffed by volunteers, who collect food twice a week from the Southeast Alaska Food Bank (the cheapest place for pantries to obtain food but by no means free) and open the Pantry doors every Saturday morning. Our two small congregations also willingly bear the cost of providing this service as a tangible expression of faith in action.

Other than capturing how many mouths a shopper is feeding, our pantry is a “no questions asked” pantry, allowing shoppers the dignity of anonymity and of selecting the foods they want from items on our shelves. Last Saturday morning, we served more folks than ever before, with 37 shoppers feeding 100 people. On multiple Saturday mornings, we’ve heard many shoppers express worry about food insecurity in general and frustration with the SNAP program specifically.

SNAP is a crucial program that helps Alaska’s anti-hunger network to meet the need. This legislation comes at a time that food insecurity levels are already elevated. For these reasons, we support HB196 and SB149 to reduce hunger in Alaska, eliminate administrative burdens on the Division of Public Assistance, and save the state money.

Thank you for your sponsorship of this important legislation,

Jetta Whittaker

Jetta Whittaker, Food Pantry Coordinator

Juneau Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

From: [Mary Rosenfield](#)
To: [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Rep. Genevieve Mina](#); [Sen. James Kaufman](#); [Rep. Julie Coulombe](#)
Subject: SB149 and HB 196
Date: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 3:31:11 PM

Dear **Senators and Representatives**,

I am writing to express my strong support for H.B. 196 and S.B. 149, which aim to implement Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

I am a 27 year resident of Sugar Circle, Anchorage, Alaska and have volunteered for three years at the St. Francis Food Pantry of Catholic Social Services. Over the past three years, the number of families needing food has increased significantly (very long car lines) and we volunteers are scrambling to get enough food ready and bagged for each day's clients.

Food insecurity is on the rise and BBCE can stop it. Implementing BBCE expands SNAP access and eligibility. This primarily benefits large working families, who often have high competing expenses such as childcare, housing, and utilities.

The implementation of BBCE also removes the asset test, relieving the heavy administrative burden on the Department of Public Assistance. These asset tests penalize families striving to increase income and savings—crucial steps toward self-sufficiency. Eliminating this test empowers families to build assets and is particularly beneficial for seniors, who often rely on essential savings.

H.B. 196 and S.B. 149 would make improvements to Alaska's federally funded SNAP program while also reducing the workload for eligibility technicians at the Division of Public Assistance.

For these reasons, I strongly support HB 196 and SB 149 to expand SNAP access, alleviate administrative burden, and support working families and seniors in our community. **Thank you for all you do.**

Sincerely,

Mary Rosenfield

9430 Sugar Circle, Anchorage

From: [Anchor Point Food Pantry](#)
To: [Rep. Genevieve Mina](#)
Subject: BBCE
Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023 7:34:15 PM

Dear Representative Mina,

Thank you so much for introducing HB 196 and SB 149 to implement Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which allows states to eliminate the asset test and raise the gross income eligibility limits for certain households.

Options under BBCE will provide targeted assistance for low income working families and seniors. Raising the gross income limit primarily benefits working families with children, as they are more likely to have competing expenses like childcare, housing, and utilities, leaving them unable to afford the necessary foods for a healthy diet. Removing the asset test helps households – often seniors – with modest savings or assets still qualify for the assistance they need, while reducing the administrative burden on the State. We have several seniors that come to the pantry for being over-resourced and trying to make ends meet. One had two vehicles, but one old vehicle was to plow their driveway and take trash to the dump. Another was too ill to focus enough to sell her old stuff. Another had to close their business because it brought them just over the line. Another, their vehicle was too new, but they needed it to get to doctors' appointments! Meds aren't taken into consideration – Do I eat, or do I take my medicine?! Do I eat or pay the rent? Do I eat or buy gas to get to work? Young families too!

When Alaskans needing assistance are not able to receive SNAP, they show up at food banks and pantries like the Anchor Point Food Pantry. This legislation comes at a time that food insecurity levels are already elevated. In a population of less than 2000 we have over 300 households a year that need our assistance between the lack of jobs and increase of rent, food, and gasoline. SNAP is a crucial program that helps Alaska's anti-hunger network to meet the need.

For these reasons, we support HB196 and SB149 to reduce hunger in Alaska, eliminate administrative burdens on the Division of Public Assistance, and save the state money.

Thank you for listening,

Melissa

Melissa J Martin

APFP President, E.D.
(907) 299-8437