

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO
SENATE, No. 2035

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 23, 2022

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2035, with committee amendments.

As amended by the committee, this bill clarifies that participation in the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (NJ SNAP) Employment and Training Program (ETP) is voluntary. Under an all-voluntary program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients choose whether or not to participate in the ETP, with no adverse consequences for participants' SNAP benefits. This provision ensures that additional food insecure households in New Jersey maintain eligibility for SNAP benefits, and maximizes federal dollars available through the SNAP ETP. SNAP, which is funded by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), but is administered by the states, is a nutrition assistance program for low-income households.

Under the bill, both the Department of Human Services (department) and a county welfare agency are prohibited from requiring a SNAP recipient to participate in a NJ SNAP ETP activity or a NJ SNAP ETP Provider 50/50 Match Project in order to be deemed eligible for SNAP benefits. The bill additionally prohibits SNAP disqualification solely due to a SNAP recipient's nonparticipation in a SNAP ETP activity. The bill, however, explicitly states that the authority of the department or a county welfare agency to impose penalties for noncompliance with federal SNAP work requirements will not be restricted.

As defined under the bill, the "NJ SNAP ETP" means the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Program, through which SNAP recipients acquire the skills, training, work, or experience necessary to obtain regular employment, as established under the SNAP and as described in the most recent State Employment and Training Plan submitted to the FNS. The NJ SNAP ETP 50/50 Match Project, established pursuant to P.L.2013, c.45 (C.44:10-95 et seq.), is an optional program within the NJ SNAP ETP in which the State receives reimbursement grants from the federal

government to fund third-party contractors who provide eligible employment and training services to program participants. The bill also amends the existing law governing the NJ SNAP ETP 50/50 Match Project to conform with the provisions of the bill.

The bill directs the department and each county welfare agency to ensure that all recipients of benefits under SNAP are provided with the opportunity to participate in employment and training activities consistent with federal SNAP ETP reimbursement requirements. The department, additionally, is required to submit any necessary revisions to the State Employment and Training Plan to the FNS in order to satisfy the provisions of the bill.

As reported by the committee with amendments, Senate Bill No. 2035 is identical to Assembly Bill No. 2360 (2R), which was also reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments remove a provision from the bill that would require:

- the Commissioner of Human Services (commissioner) to annually request a federal waiver of the SNAP benefit time limit for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) for the maximum number of geographic areas in the State which are eligible for such a waiver; and
- the Governor to support and direct the commissioner to submit a waiver request for those geographic areas in the State that represent the highest number of SNAP participants eligible for a waiver of the ABAWD time limit on SNAP benefits.

The committee amendments revise the title, synopsis, and effective date of the bill to reflect this change.

The committee amendments make a technical change concerning capitalization.