



The Senate of the State of New Hampshire

107 North Main Street, Concord, N.H. 03301-4951

November 17, 2020

Via Hand Delivery to:

Hon. Christopher T. Sununu, Governor
Office of the Governor
State House, 2nd Floor
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Taylor Caswell
State of New Hampshire Governor's Office for Relief and Recovery
1 Eagle Square
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Governor Sununu and members of the GOFERR Legislative Advisory Board,

In light of today's postponed GOFERR Legislative Advisory Board meeting, we write to you to share our support for the NH Hunger Solutions proposal to temporarily increase the funding provided through New Hampshire's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that would benefit an estimated 70,000 Granite Staters.

In a letter dated October 30, NH Hunger Solutions - a coalition of a dozen non-partisan advocacy organizations - wrote to the Governor's Office and the Governor's Office for Economic Relief and Recovery with a host of suggestions about how to use the remaining federal CARES Act funds to address growing food insecurity in our state. According to the letter, 1 in 6 people in New Hampshire are now food insecure - 2 ½ times the number at the beginning of 2019. The NH Food Bank estimates that 21-23% of children in the state are now living in food insecure environments due to the economic crisis stemming from COVID-19.

From the first day of this pandemic, we have understood that the onset of winter would bring unprecedented challenges to our most vulnerable populations. Particularly now, as we see the devastating effect COVID-19 has had on housing and food security, we share the NH Hunger Solutions' position that federal CARES Act funding has the ability to address this growing issue of food insecurity.



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While a full accounting from GOFERR regarding CARES Act fund balances is still forthcoming, Commissioner Caswell stated this weekend on WMUR, that there is at least \$38 million still available to allocate. A small portion of those remaining dollars can and should be used to distribute an emergency allotment to SNAP households. While we look forward to discussing the below proposal with the full Legislative Advisory Board at our November 23 meeting, we felt it was critical to underscore the importance of this proposal as soon as possible given the limited time frame which New Hampshire has to spend the remaining CARES Act funds before they lapse back to the federal government.

Currently, New Hampshire SNAP recipients receive \$1.82 per person, per meal for 31 days, or \$169.26/month. Using data available from October 2020, 70,292 individuals received SNAP in New Hampshire. A CARES Act allocation of just \$11,897,634 would enable New Hampshire to double benefits for the month of December. By utilizing existing EBT cards and current guidelines for SNAP benefits to deliver these funds, DHHS could add the funds relatively quickly and easily to help these families.

While these funds will provide critical support to families, they will also provide an economic boost to New Hampshire communities - specifically to our local grocers and small businesses. As cited in an analysis from the NH Fiscal Policy Institute this summer, the economic impact of SNAP is between \$1.50 and \$1.74 per dollar spent, which would bring the value of this investment to a total of \$17,846,436 to \$20,701,866. Further, this influx of aid would allow families to do what many of us take for granted - the ability to stock up on non-perishables and avoid frequent trips to the store during the pandemic.

Thank you all for considering this initiative to combat food insecurity in our state and quickly deliver aid to hungry families ahead of the holidays and the onset of winter. Should you, Governor Sununu, or any members of the GOFERR team wish to discuss this proposal ahead of the next GOFERR LAB meeting, our doors are open. We look forward to continuing to work together to provide quick and efficient aid to Granite Staters impacted by this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Donna Soucy
Senate President, GOFERR LAB member

Stephen Shurtleff
Speaker of the House, GOFERR LAB member

Lou D'Allesandro
Senate Finance Chair, GOFERR LAB member

Mary Jane Wallner
House Finance Chair, GOFERR LAB member