



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 543-A

Resolution calling on the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate to pass and the President to sign a Farm Bill that preserves funding for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program.

By Council Members Recchia, Greenfield, Brewer, Fidler, Gentile, James, Koppell, Koslowitz, Lander, Mealy, Palma, Rodriguez, Rose, Williams, The Speaker (Council Member Quinn), Reyna, Lappin, Weprin, Van Bramer, Wills, Arroyo, Dickens, Jackson and Mark-Viverito

Whereas, The Farm Bill is a federal bill that sets policy for government farm subsidies and nutrition programs, including but not limited to, the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (“SNAP”), formerly known as food stamps; and

Whereas, The Farm Bill is typically revised every five years and is currently being debated in the U.S House of Representatives and U.S Senate Agriculture Committees; and

Whereas, On June 10, 2013 the U.S. Senate approved a new Farm Bill, which would cut \$4.1 billion in SNAP funding over the next 10 years; and

Whereas, On June 20, 2013 the U.S House of Representatives rejected a new Farm Bill with \$20 billion in cuts in SNAP finding over the next 10 years; and

Whereas, SNAP benefits are redeemed in grocery stores and food markets, providing an economic stimulus and helping low-income families purchase food; and

Whereas, According to Moody’s Analytics, each dollar spent on food stamps in a depressed economy raises Gross Domestic Product by \$1.70; and

Whereas, According to City Harvest, the Food Bank for New York City and the New York City Coalition against Hunger, due to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 expiring there will already be an estimated loss of \$15 million a month to the New York City economy beginning on November 1,

2014; and

Whereas, According to the Food Research and Action Center (“FRAC”), national SNAP participation increased in March 2013 by 168,888 to a total of 47,727,052 people and was 1.3 million people higher than in March 2012; and

Whereas, In March 2013, 3,182,976 people receiving SNAP resided in New York State, an increase of 101,145 people from the previous year; and

Whereas, In March 2013, 1,872,945 people receiving SNAP resided in New York City, an increase of 51,922 people from the previous year; and

Whereas, According to FRAC, the increase in SNAP participation is attributed to high levels of unemployment, underemployment and poverty with one in five Americans struggling with “food hardships” in 2012; and

Whereas, FRAC also states that despite the growth in SNAP participation there are still people in need of benefits who are not receiving them, with one in four people eligible for SNAP going unserved; and

Whereas, According to the Fiscal Policy Institute, poverty has increased and incomes have decreased every year in New York City since 2008 with median incomes dropping by 8% and one in ten workers being paid wages that keep them in poverty; and

Whereas, According to the US Census Bureau and the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service, if SNAP counted towards income it would have lifted 3.9 million Americans above the poverty level in 2011; and

Whereas, Initiatives that help increase healthy food access are important for the health of children, adults, and communities, in both the short- and long-term; and

Whereas, In fact, according to a report titled, “The Effect of the Recession on Child Well-Being” (“the Report”), children’s academic achievements are negatively impacted by inadequate access to food because poor nutrition affects cognitive and psychosocial development and causes illnesses that may result in increased school absences and decreased ability to focus in class; and

Whereas, According to the Report, participation in programs such as SNAP can improve nutritional outcomes among children, and these programs often function as a lifeline for low-income families dealing with food insecurity; and

Whereas, Therefore, it is especially important to preserve funding for SNAP in difficult economic times since it helps lift families out of poverty, stimulates the economy and improves outcomes for children; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York is calling on the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate to pass and the President to sign a Farm Bill that preserves funding to the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program.

WJH/EH
6/18/13
LS #1525