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H.271

Introduced by Representatives Pugh of South Burlington and Haas of
Rochester

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Human services; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program;
administration

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require the
State to maximize participant eligibility and simplify the administrative burden
on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applicants and
participants. It also creates the SNAP Advisory Council.

An act relating to administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
Program

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 33 V.S.A. chapter 17 is amended to read:

CHAPTER 17. ~~FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFITS~~
SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

§ 1701. SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

(a)(1) The State of Vermont may participate in the federal Supplemental
Nutrition Assistance Program ~~which is provided for under~~ (SNAP) pursuant to

1 7 U.S.C. chapter 51. The Commissioner may adopt, amend, or repeal rules
2 governing the operation of the Program in the State.

3 (2) To the extent Vermont participates in SNAP, the Commissioner shall
4 maximize participant eligibility and simplify the administrative burden on
5 SNAP applicants and participants. The Secretary of Human Services, on
6 behalf of the Department for Children and Families, shall apply for,
7 implement, and renew all applicable federal waivers designed to increase
8 access to and lower barriers for applicants and participants of SNAP.

9 (b) An individual domiciled in Vermont shall be exempt from the
10 disqualification provided for in 21 U.S.C. § 862a.

11 (c) When used in this section, “Commissioner” means the Commissioner
12 for Children and Families and “Department” means the Department for
13 Children and Families.

14 * * *

15 § 1703. CHANGES TO PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

16 (a) The Department for Children and Families shall conduct and publish on
17 its website an analysis of the administrative costs and impacts on SNAP
18 applicants and participants within 30 days of the publication of any proposed
19 legislative action amending the Program’s administration.

20 (b) Any proposed policy, procedure, or other change to the administration
21 of SNAP in Vermont that restricts eligibility, increases barriers or creates

1 hardships to access, or inhibits benefit usage for applicants or participants shall
2 require the adoption of a rule pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25. Proposed
3 SNAP rules shall maximize participant eligibility and simplify the
4 administrative burden on SNAP applicants and participants to the extent
5 possible under federal law.

6 § 1704. ADVISORY COMMITTEE

7 (a) Creation. There is created the SNAP Advisory Committee to assess and
8 recommend policy options available to the State for maintaining or expanding
9 SNAP benefits to Vermonters.

10 (b) Membership. The Advisory Committee shall be composed of the
11 following members:

12 (1) one current member of the House of Representatives, who shall be
13 appointed by the Speaker of the House;

14 (2) one current member of the Senate, who shall be appointed by the
15 Committee on Committees;

16 (3) the Secretary of Human Services or designee;

17 (4) the Commissioner for Children and Families or designee;

18 (5) one advocate for food security, appointed by Hunger Free Vermont;

19 (6) one representative of the community action agencies, appointed by
20 the Governor; and

1 (7) one representative of the area agencies on aging, appointed by the
2 Governor.

3 (c) Powers and duties. The Advisory Committee shall provide assistance to
4 the Department for Children and Families regarding its implementation of
5 SNAP, including:

6 (1) exploring federal waivers and other new opportunities to expand
7 SNAP eligibility and lower barriers to access;

8 (2) examining existing State policies and procedures to determine
9 whether any limitations are embedded in the State's administration
10 of SNAP; and

11 (3) recommending legislative action that would result in greater food
12 security to Vermont's population with low income.

13 (d) Assistance. The Advisory Committee shall have the administrative,
14 technical, and legal assistance of the Agency of Human Services.

15 (e) Report. Annually, on or before January 15, the Advisory Committee
16 shall submit a written report to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare
17 and to the House Committee on Human Services with its findings and any
18 recommendations for legislative action.

19 (f) Meetings.

20 (1) The Secretary of Human Services or designee shall call the first
21 meeting of the Advisory Committee to occur on or before September 30, 2017.

1 (2) The Committee shall select a chair from among its members at the
2 first meeting.

3 (g) Reimbursement.

4 (1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General
5 Assembly, legislative members of the Advisory Committee shall be entitled to
6 per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A.
7 § 406 for no more than three meetings annually.

8 (2) Other members of the Advisory Committee who are not employees
9 of the State of Vermont and who are not otherwise compensated or reimbursed
10 for their attendance shall be entitled to per diem compensation and
11 reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for no more than
12 three meetings annually.

13 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

14 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.