



To: Health & Human Services Committee
From: Tom Venzor, Executive Director
Nebraska Catholic Conference
Subject: LB169 & LB402 (Eligibility for SNAP Benefits) (Support)
Date: February 7, 2019

Madame Chair Howard and Members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

The Nebraska Catholic Conference advocates for the public policy interests of the Catholic Church and advances the Gospel of Life through engaging, educating, and empowering public officials, Catholic laity, and the general public. I would like to express our support for LB169 and LB402.

Adequate and nutritious food is a basic need that is integral to protecting the life and dignity of the human person. SNAP provides an important government program that assists in meeting this basic need to combat hunger in the nation by feeding millions of persons every year.

Eliminating access to SNAP for people who have at some point in their lifetime committed certain crimes repeatedly creates risks to successful re-entry into society.

Knowing that there are two policy proposals on this issue between Senator Hunt (LB169) and Senator Hilkemann (LB402), the NCC hopes that a satisfactory, prudent, and just legislative approach can be reached between the two proposals. The NCC sees wisdom in both proposals in terms of granting more access to SNAP benefits but also including provisions to ensure self-responsibility and providing the proper assistance that may be needed with those who may be overcoming previous drug-related convictions or addictions.

In addition to the assistance that is provided through SNAP, the Catholic Church and her many parishes, organizations, and programs across the state of Nebraska remains an avenue, among many others, in assisting those who have difficulties—in their present circumstances—in accessing the basic need of food.

The Nebraska Catholic Conference respectfully urges your support for this legislation. I request that this letter be made part of the public record.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our position.