



TO: Health & Human Services
FROM: Tom Venzor, Executive Director
Nebraska Catholic Conference
DATE: February 17, 2021
RE: LB121 (Eligibility for SNAP Benefits) (Support)

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 LB121.

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 governmental program that assists in meeting this basic need to combat hunger in the nation by feeding millions of persons every year. In doing so, collectively—as a state community—we are able to help foster a society that feeds the hungry, as Christ instructed in the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel of Saint Matthew.

Eliminating access to SNAP for those who have at some point in their lifetime committed certain crimes creates risks to successful re-entry into society, a risk that can be readily mitigated by supporting LB121.

In the past, this Committee has heard multiple proposals for addressing SNAP eligibility for those who have committed certain criminal offenses. The NCC has supported these proposals and their overarching goal of addressing food access to those reintegrating into society. Granting more access to SNAP benefits is an important step to self-responsibility for those who are 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, for assisting those who have difficulties—in their present circumstances—in accessing the basic need of food, among many other basic material needs.

The Nebraska Catholic Conference respectfully urges your support for this legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration of our position.