

One Hundred Seventh Legislature - First Session - 2021

Introducer's Statement of Intent

LB356

Chairperson: Senator John Arch

Committee: Health and Human Services

Date of Hearing: February 17, 2021

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB 356 would opt Nebraska out of a federal option the state has elected under SNAP called the "comparable disqualification" option. Since Nebraska has taken this option, if an individual fails to meet any requirements under some other federal benefit program such as TANF, DHHS can automatically cut their SNAP benefits.

SNAP has suspended work requirements across the country due to COVID-19, but Nebraskans are still receiving reduced SNAP benefits as a result of unmet work requirements in other programs. Some are being sanctioned for noncompliance with education requirements for ADC because they are taking online classes instead of in-person classes due to the pandemic.

SNAP is federally funded, so this change should come at no cost to the state. The state's current election to use this option is harming struggling Nebraskans who are being sanctioned for things that are outside their control in other programs and then also getting their SNAP benefits cut. Regardless of the pandemic, this option is unnecessarily punitive.

LB 356 opts us out of the comparable disqualification option, which requires the Department to determine a person's eligibility SNAP program individually and independently from their eligibility for other programs.

Principal Introducer: _____

Senator Megan Hunt