

Changes to SNAP: Implications for South Carolina's Most Vulnerable Populations

Erin Paradiso

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Monique Constance-Huggins

Thirteen percent of households in South Carolina do not receive adequate food each month (America's Health Rankings, 2018). This is problematic given that having sufficient nourishment is linked to good health and performance in school. For example, children who do not receive proper nutrition are not able to concentrate and function well in the classroom, thereby causing them to perform poorly. The rate of food insecurity in South Carolina is alarming despite the low unemployment rate of 3.4% (United States Department of Labor, 2018). This implies that many people may be working jobs that are not paying them a living wage. This means that they are not able to meet many of their basic needs, including food. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a program in place to help low-income families purchase food.

Recently, the South Carolina Senate introduced Bill 38.32 that can impact the extent to which people in need can access SNAP. The bill prohibits the state from accepting a waiver of the work requirement for SNAP. There are several implications for this bill. First, the bill overlooks the reality that while the unemployment rate is currently low because of a fairly healthy economy, this situation could quickly change which means that people could be out of jobs due to no fault of their own. The consequence of this is that those who are in need of food stamps in order to survive will no longer be able to benefit from the program if they are unable to meet the job requirement. Populations such as single parents or the elderly who face food insecurity will be impacted at far higher rates due to their vulnerable status in society as they tend to have lower income than other members of society. Second, the bill also overlooks the fact that many people who need assistance with food have significant barriers to employment such as mental illness, disability and discrimination. Therefore, they may not be able to meet the work requirements.

Third, it overlooks the fact that many of the state's vulnerable populations are living in rural areas where there are limited job opportunities which could limit a person's employment options. The South Carolina Senate could benefit from researching and taking into consideration the detrimental impact that the bill will have on the most vulnerable people in the state.

This poster presentation will shed light on the proposed bill and discuss its impact on vulnerable populations especially children. Lastly, it will offer recommendations for improving the bill and ultimately improving food security in South Carolina.

Learning objectives:

By the end of this presentation, conference participants will be able to;

1. Describe the extent of food insecurity in South Carolina.
2. Describe the proposed South Carolina bill 38.32.
3. Articulate the impact of the bill on vulnerable population, especially children.
4. Describe a course of action to increase food security among South Carolinians.

References

America's Health Rankings United Health Foundation. (2018). *Trend: Food Insecurity- Household, South Carolina, United States*. Retrieved from https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/health-of-women-and-children/measure/food_insecurity_household/state/SC

United States Department of Labor. (2018). *Local Area Unemployment Statistics*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm>