

Senate Finance Committee

Deb Martone 271-4980

AMENDMENT #2026-1330s, supporting administrative costs for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), to HB 1574-FN, relative to the extension of free and reduced price breakfast and lunch for students under the age of 22 and making an appropriation therefor.

Hearing Date: April 14, 2026

Time Opened: 1:30 p.m.

Time Closed: 1:48 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Gray, Innis, Birdsell, Pearl, Lang, Rosenwald and Watters

Member of the Committee Absent: Senator Carson

Bill Analysis: This bill extends breakfast and lunch aid for all students that are the age of 21 who previously qualified for the National School Lunch Program or National School Breakfast Program at the age of 20. The bill also permits participating schools as eligible to receive reimbursements for school breakfasts and lunches that are provided to qualifying students and makes an appropriation for such purpose.

Sponsors:

Rep. Weinstein

Rep. Cornell

Rep. Selig

Rep. Sorensen

Who supports the amendment: Representative Weinstein; Christine Santaniello; Nathan White; Laura Milliken; Karen Rosenberg;

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator Innis introduced Amendment #2026-1330s on behalf of Senator Gray.

Christine Santaniello, Associate Commissioner and Nathan White, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Health and Human Services:

- Amendment #2026-1330s will provide DHHS with funding to administer the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- With the enactment of HR1 the federal percentage match changed. Currently, there is a 50/50 match with the federal government for the administration of SNAP funds. Starting October 1, 2026 that goes to a 75% state match and a 25% federal match.
- HR1 occurred after the approval of the state's biennium budget.

- Senator Rosenwald explained Senator Abbas had a bill in the House Finance Committee earlier in the week that would require DHHS to transfer the \$4.4 million into the SNAP administrative line. Is it possible we might be double paying the SNAP administrative line if we appropriate this money? Mr. White stated he has no concerns that would happen. The way that Senator Abbas' bill is written it requires the Department to find other funds to backfill the federal shortfall they currently have budgeted. The SNAP administrative costs are budgeted across several dozen accounts and class lines. There is a mix today of 50 percent General Funds and part federal funds. Now that the Department won't have any of those federal dollars available, it needs these General Funds to continue funding the program as it is today. Senator Abbas' bill directed DHHS to transfer funds with Fiscal Committee approval, which they would have to do anyway. Mr. White didn't see any clear requirement in that bill other than ensuring the Department funds the SNAP program.
- Senator Watters asked about the Department of Education's \$80,000 appropriation in Amendment #2026-1330s. Mr. White could not speak to that section of the bill.
- Senator Lang stated as he reads the amendment, the \$4.4 million represents 25 percent of the operational cost of SNAP for administrative services. Mr. White explained the change takes effect October 1 of 2026. That represents an estimated 75 percent of the fiscal year. If it were a full year it would be approximately \$5.9 million. This basically gives the Department supplemental funding for three quarters of the state's Fiscal Year 2027. Senator Lang stated it makes him even more concerned that \$4.4 million represents one quarter of the administrative cost. Mr. White continued in 2026 they will have three months of the 50/50 state/federal match, and then on October 1st it goes to the 75% state match.
- Senator Lang inquired as to how much DHHS pays in gross per year for administration to the SNAP program. Mr. White stated committee members probably want to think about this in two separate ways: 1) what the administrative costs to run the SNAP program are; and 2) what the Department is able to claim in federal revenue to attribute to the SNAP program. They use an allocation system to maximize all of the federal revenue that is available to the state. It is not as simple as the entire administration being in a single accounting unit. They try to allocate those costs so that they can claim SNAP Medicaid funds on them. The total they're starting from is approximately \$24 million. But that does not necessarily represent the operating costs directly related to the program. It represents the total SNAP administrative costs that they've been able to claim that they will no longer receive. It will leave their budget in 2027 with a \$4.4 million deficit. Senator Lang sought to confirm the cost of administration isn't the cost of the program. There is additional funding beyond that in SNAP benefits. Mr. White agreed the \$24 million doesn't include the SNAP benefits themselves, only the administrative cost to administer the program. He also explained SNAP benefits are not part of the operating budget. The program is a line of credit that's drawn directly from the federal

government and paid to recipients. Those are 100 percent federal funds until the next biennium.

- Senator Rosenwald asked Mr. White to review the timing with committee members once more. He stated the administrative rate change will take effect on October 1, 2026, which is FY 2027 for the state.

Representative Toni Weinstein:

- Representative Weinstein is the prime sponsor of HB 1574-FN. It's an important bill.
- She has worked with food insecure people in New Hampshire for the past several years. Representative Weinstein manages the Newmarket Food Pantry and she has also been a volunteer with the New Hampshire Food Bank. Through that work, she has done SNAP outreach and education, and helped people sign up for SNAP benefits.
- In following up with individuals after they've submitted their applications, Representative Weinstein has learned how having access to SNAP has impacted their lives.
- Ensuring the SNAP program is adequately funded and administered should be a priority.

Laura Milliken, Executive Director, NH Hunger Solutions:

- SNAP is a complicated program to run. It is incredibly important to run the program efficiently so that we don't incur error rate penalties. Under HR1, error rates matter in a way that could cost New Hampshire quite a lot of money in benefits starting in FY 2027.
- Currently, the benefits individuals receive on their debit cards is 100 percent federal, but that could change if New Hampshire incurs a high error rate. It is critically important we have the administrative dollars to be able to run the program efficiently.
- Senator Lang asked what are the annual number of recipients on the SNAP program, and the annual benefit? Ms. Milliken stated it is about \$350 a month, and benefits approximately 70,000 individuals or 43,000 households. The program brings in \$158 million a year in revenue to the state. Of the participating merchants, about one thousand are small "Mom and Pop" retailers and farmers markets. It is important for our economy.
- Senator Watters mentioned a neighboring state has/is moving towards having chip-enabled benefit cards. He wondered if we have that. Commissioner Santaniello doesn't believe New Hampshire has chip-enabled benefit cards. She agreed to check for Senator Watters. He indicated such cards would help the federal government when it comes to fraud.

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Date Hearing Report completed: April 15, 2026