

February 25, 2026



Representative Wayne MacDonald, Chair
House Health, Human Services, and Elderly Affairs Committee
1 Granite Place, Room 158
Concord, NH 03301

Re: HB 1797: relative to eligibility for public assistance, including the New Hampshire employment program, family assistance program, and SNAP.

Dear Chairman MacDonald and Honorable Members of the House Health, Human Services, and Elderly Affairs Committee,

New Hampshire Hunger Solutions appreciates the opportunity to testify in **opposition to HB 1797**. We are a statewide, nonprofit organization that works with all parties to advocate to end food insecurity, improve equitable access to nutritious food, and address the root causes of hunger for all in New Hampshire.

HB 1797 would dramatically restructure New Hampshire's SNAP program in ways that undermine the state's ability to administer benefits, keep costs down, and ensure our neighbors have access to food. Instead of connecting families to resources, this bill pays more to get less done – it unnecessarily drains NH funds to push families away from nutrition by restructuring SNAP in a way that undermines efficiency, drives up taxpayer costs, and sabotages the safety net for 76,000 Granite Staters—all while the state is already struggling to absorb the \$4.6 million federal administrative cost shift.

We ask you to hear the five core negative impacts of this proposal:

1. Eliminating Discretion for Work Rule Waivers: HB 1797 prohibits DHHS from using federal waivers or discretion to exempt individuals from work rules without legislative approval creating a rigid system unable to respond to crises. DHHS would be legally barred from helping families in crisis.

2. Removing Categorical Eligibility: By ending categorical eligibility, the bill targets the "working poor" who earn slightly above federal limits but are struggling with high costs of living and rising food costs. These families would lose SNAP under the bill, and its effect would be kick 6,000 children off the free and reduced school meal program in NH. It also forces DHHS to return to outdated asset tests which increases administrative costs and redundant paperwork at

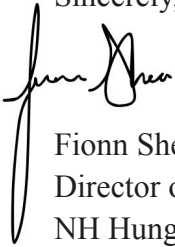
DHHS, a department that is currently understaffed by at least 70 positions statewide, which will increase Hampshire's SNAP error rate to beyond 7%.

3. Criminalizing Border-State Realities: HB 1797 flags any household using EBT out-of-state for 60 days as a fraud risk. In a state where residents daily cross borders for work, medical care, or cheaper groceries in MA, ME, or VT, this provision polices innocent citizens and creates additional workload for the Division of Economic and Housing Stability. NH State had less than 30 potential SNAP fraud cases in FY2024 out of 76,000 participants (.04%).

4. Unfunded Mandates for Local Grocers: The proposed candy and soda ban turns grocery clerks into government enforcement agents. Small, rural grocers cannot afford the expensive technology upgrades required to code thousands of items and deciphering "what is a candy bar" and definitions of a "soda". Many grocers have relayed to the NH Grocer's Association that they would rather stop accepting SNAP entirely, creating food deserts.

HB 1797 replaces state flexibility with expensive red tape. It increases administrative costs and federal penalty risks, reduces NH revenue brought in by SNAP, and places financial burden on small businesses and working families. We urge you to find this bill **Inexpedient to Legislate.**

Sincerely,



Fionn Shea
Director of Communications and Grassroots Policy
NH Hunger Solutions