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February 6, 2025

To: Chairperson Hansen and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee
From: Katie Nungesser, Policy Coordinator for Voices for Children in Nebraska
RE: Support for LB 192- Eliminate a sunset date under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Nebraskans are hard-working people. In 2022, 77.6% of children in our state had all available parents in the workforce.¹ Unfortunately, high labor force participation does not always equate to economic stability. Many working parents still struggle to afford basic necessities due to rising costs, particularly food. Inflation has made it even more difficult for families to stretch their paychecks, and for some, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) remains essential to covering their grocery budgets. Ensuring access to SNAP means ensuring Nebraska's children have the nutrition they need to grow, learn, and thrive.

I am submitting this letter on behalf of Voices for Children in Nebraska in strong support of LB 192, which maintains the increased gross eligibility for SNAP in our state. This policy ensures that working families—who may earn just above traditional eligibility thresholds but still face financial hardship—do not fall through the cracks. When parents can put food on the table without having to choose between paying for rent, childcare, or medical expenses, children have a better chance at a stable, healthy future.

Why Maintaining Increased Gross Eligibility for SNAP Matters for Nebraska's Kids

1. Reduces Childhood Hunger

SNAP is one of the most effective tools in reducing food insecurity among children. At least one in five kids in Nebraska is experiencing food insecurity.² By keeping the increased gross eligibility, we ensure that more families—particularly those in the lower-wage workforce—can access the nutrition their children need to grow, develop, and succeed in school.

2. Supports Child Health and Development

Proper nutrition is foundational for a child's physical and cognitive development. Research shows that children who have consistent access to nutritious food perform better academically, have fewer health issues, and experience improved long-term outcomes. Maintaining increased eligibility ensures more children receive these benefits.

3. Helps Working Families Make Ends Meet

This bill specifically impacts working Nebraskan families that qualify under increased gross eligibility and who still struggle to afford necessities due to high costs of living. SNAP helps bridge the gap between income and essential needs, allowing parents to put food on the table while covering housing, childcare, and medical expenses. It also reduces the cliff effect and allows a smoother more sustainable transition off of SNAP and other programs.

4. Strengthens Local Economies

SNAP benefits are spent directly in local grocery stores and markets, supporting Nebraska's economy. By maintaining increased eligibility, we not only assist families but also bolster local businesses, especially in rural areas where food access can be more challenging.



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5. Prevents the Cycle of Poverty

Access to sufficient, nutritious food is a key factor in breaking cycles of poverty. Children who grow up with stable nutrition are more likely to thrive in school and achieve economic stability as adults. Cutting back eligibility would push more families into food insecurity, leading to long-term negative consequences for Nebraska's future workforce and economy.

Keeping the increased gross eligibility for SNAP is a smart, family-centered policy that prioritizes the health and success of Nebraska's children. It ensures that thousands of working families can provide the nutrition their kids need to thrive while also supporting local businesses and the state's economic future.

We thank Senator Quick for introducing LB 192 and we respectfully urge this committee to continue supporting policies that strengthen food security for Nebraska's families. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Katie Nungesser