



February 19, 2026

To: Chairperson Hardin and members of the Health and Human Services Committee

From: Katie Nungesser, Voices for Children in Nebraska

Re: Support of LB 843, Require the Department of Health and Human Services to file a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program waiver for refugees and immigrants

Access to food is essential for a child's health, growth, and ability to thrive. Voices for Children in Nebraska strongly supports LB 843, which would restore access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for lawfully present immigrants, including refugees, asylees, and certain others. This bill responds to a gap created by H.R.1 in Congress that has caused confusion, hardship, and food insecurity for some of Nebraska's most vulnerable families.

According to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, nearly 70,000 children in our state relied on SNAP in 2023. At the same time, the USDA reports that 84 percent of food insecure children live in rural communities, where families face longer drives to grocery stores, fewer food pantries, higher food prices, and limited access to support services. In many parts of rural Nebraska, parents are already working for lower wages while paying more for basic necessities, leaving families with impossible choices between food, housing, and utilities. When access to SNAP is disrupted, it does not create inconvenience. It creates hunger. It creates fear. And it places children in situations where their health, learning, and stability are put at risk.

SNAP benefits help families put meals on the table and provide children with the nutrition they need to be healthy and engaged in school and in their communities. When immigrant household members lose SNAP benefits, the children living in those homes feel the impact immediately. Even if the children themselves remain eligible, their families receive smaller benefits, and that is not enough to meet the household's needs. LB 843 would allow Nebraska to apply for a federal SNAP waiver and restore access for families so they can feed their children and continue to build stability.

Immigrant and refugee community members play an important role in Nebraska. First, they are our neighbors and friends. They work for and support our systems such as health care, agriculture, education, construction, and care taking. When these community members have access to food, they can continue working, supporting their children, and

participating in life. LB 843 helps these families stand on their feet and keeps children fed, healthy, and ready to grow.

This bill also reflects Nebraska values. Our state has a history of welcoming people who need protection. By applying for a SNAP waiver, Nebraska can remove unnecessary barriers, make sure families get the support they need, and uphold our responsibility to all children in our communities.

Food insecurity affects children in deep and lasting ways. Children who experience hunger are more likely to have health challenges, struggle in school, and carry stress into their daily lives. LB 843 is a chance to address that suffering, give families the tools to care for their kids, and create stronger, healthier communities.

We urge this committee to advance LB 843. Providing access to nutrition assistance is not only the right thing to do for families but also an investment in the well-being and future of all Nebraska kids.

Thank you, Senator Rountree, for continuing to breakdown barriers to food security in Nebraska and to this committee for your time and attention.