

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND OTHER FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, North Carolina is the 8th hungriest state in the nation. While average monthly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are nominal, about \$119 per household, the program is vital to helping people access nutritious food; and Durham County is the fourth most expensive county to live in North Carolina and is only growing more expensive. With 32,787 residents of Durham County relying on SNAP benefits to help pay for their groceries, food insecurity still persists with a rate of 17.9%. According to the 2016 Durham County Health Assessment Survey, 15.8% of residents reported they cut the size of or skipped meals because there was not enough money for food; and

WHEREAS, SNAP helps those most vulnerable. In Durham County, SNAP benefits are provided predominantly to households with children, seniors, or people with disabilities. About half of those receiving SNAP benefits are employed; and

WHEREAS, SNAP participation is shown to improve nutrition and promote positive long-term health outcomes. Participation for six months can increase food security in a household by up to 10%. Furthermore, individuals who had access to food stamps in early childhood have a lower risk of obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes as adults. Additionally, access to SNAP is associated with increased utilization of preventative care, which can contribute to lower overall healthcare costs. A national level study found that SNAP participation was associated with a \$1400 reduction, per household, in yearly healthcare expenditures¹; and

WHEREAS, SNAP improves the state's economy. In 2016, SNAP benefits contributed \$2.2 billion to North Carolina's economy. These economic benefits were especially impactful in the agricultural and retail sectors. In Durham County, innovative programs such as Farmer's Market Double Bucks program allow SNAP participants to access nutrition and improve the local economy; over \$55,000 of SNAP/Double Bucks was spent on nutritious foods at Durham Farmers' Market since its inception in 2014. Research from Moody's Analytics show that for every dollar spent on SNAP, \$1.70 is put back into the U.S. economy. Furthermore, each year from 2009-2012, SNAP benefits helped keep 338,000 North Carolinians out of poverty, including 150,000 children. SNAP dollars encourage economic growth by supporting grocers, paying workers, and increasing the purchase of goods. SNAP allows families to participate in their local economies and helps to make our communities stronger; and

WHEREAS, SNAP is effective and efficient. SNAP's entitlement structure allows the program to expand in times of greater need, such as the 2008 recession, and contract in times of economic prosperity. Furthermore, every penny of monthly SNAP benefits for North Carolinians comes from the federal government, and the state of North Carolina is only responsible for half of the administrative costs of the program. The SNAP program therefore brings in billions of dollars of economic activity for North Carolina. SNAP also has one of the most rigorous quality control systems of

any public benefit program, which results in lower frequency of fraud or abuse, and an error rate of just 2%.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Durham County Board of Health that the Board asks Senator Burr, Senator Tillis, and Congressman Butterfield to reject any proposals in the 2018 Farm Bill that cut funding to SNAP or other federal nutrition programs, shift costs to the states, or otherwise reduce benefits affecting low-income families, workers, children, the unemployed, or the elderly.

This the 8th of March, 2018.

1. Berkowitz SA, Seligman HK, Rigdon J, Meigs JB, Basu S. Supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) participation and health care expenditures among low-income adults. *JAMA Intern Med.* 2017;177(11):1642-1649.

DRAFT