

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 204

Reps. Miller, Paiz, Price, Mentzer, Arbit, Pohutsky, Dievendorf, B. Carter, Longjohn, Coffia, Tsernoglou, Koleszar, MacDonell, Young, Hope, Puri, Rheingans, Conlin, T. Carter, Scott, Witwer, Martus and Fitzgerald offered the following resolution:

1 A resolution to urge President Donald J. Trump and the United
2 States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to activate contingency
3 funds to cover the upcoming month of food assistance benefits for
4 42 million Americans who stand to lose them on November 1 if the
5 federal government remains shut down.

6 Whereas, The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
7 is the nation's largest food assistance program, with over 42
8 million Americans relying on the program to help them put food on
9 the table. This includes approximately 1.4 million Michiganders, or
10 one in seven of the state's residents. Of Michigan's SNAP
11 participants, more than 59 percent are families with children, more

1 than 39 percent are families with older or disabled adults, and
2 more than 46 percent are working families; and

3 Whereas, On October 10, the Michigan Department of Health and
4 Human Services was notified by the United States Department of
5 Agriculture (USDA) that, due to the ongoing federal government
6 funding lapse, there will be a limited availability to distribute
7 SNAP benefits in November and to hold on issuing SNAP benefits
8 until further notice. The failure to pay these benefits means that
9 low-income families will be forced to choose between purchasing
10 food and paying for other necessities like rent and utilities,
11 children will go hungry and be unable to focus in school, and
12 individuals who are reliant on medication will have to choose
13 between taking their medicine and eating; and

14 Whereas, A lapse in SNAP benefits will have wide-reaching
15 social, health, and economic impacts. As well as putting the health
16 and well-being of SNAP participants at risk, failing to provide
17 SNAP funding will result in a loss of revenue for farmers, grocers,
18 and other small businesses; and

19 Whereas, It is all the more important that SNAP benefits be
20 distributed when millions of Americans are already struggling to
21 afford food. Staples like eggs, coffee, and ground beef all hit
22 record high prices this year. Even prior to the current funding
23 lapse, a majority of polled Americans cited the cost of groceries
24 as being a major stressor; and

25 Whereas, The federal government's claim that SNAP's
26 contingency funds are not legally available to cover regular
27 benefits is inaccurate in light of prior practice that allows for
28 the Trump administration to use its legal transfer authority, the
29 same authority it recently used to provide additional funds to the

1 Women, Infants, and Children (WIC program), to cover regular SNAP
2 benefits; and

3 Whereas, Multiple USDA documents and confirmation from the
4 Government Accountability Office (GAO) have explicitly confirmed
5 that contingency funds can be used for SNAP benefits during a
6 government shutdown in order to prevent a break in benefits; and

7 Whereas, The Trump administration itself, particularly during
8 the 2018-2019 government shutdown, as well as past administrations,
9 have all held the position that emergency contingency funds can and
10 should be used to fund SNAP during a government shutdown; now,
11 therefore be it

12 Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge
13 President Trump and the United States Department of Agriculture to
14 activate contingency funds to cover the upcoming month of food
15 assistance benefits for 42 million Americans who stand to lose them
16 on November 1 if the federal government remains shut down; and be
17 it further

18 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to
19 President Trump, the Secretary of the United States Department of
20 Agriculture, and members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

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