

Isaac Reid  
HB-5536

Written testimony in favor of House Bill 5536.

I received SNAP benefits from 2022-2024, in that time I was only able to make my SNAP dollars work in a way that fed me for the entire month because of the the bonus bucks program offered at my farmers market. Not only does this program directly benefit small local farms, it also impacts food insecurity in a state where for many of us living out in Richmond and Hope Valley, our only option for a big box grocery store is Stop & Shop - a chain currently under heavy scrutiny for price gouging in rural areas and deceptive pricing. We need this program to help feed our people. \$292 a month is not enough to feed yourself food that nourishes you and brings you joy. Now, I'm not saying that people on SNAP should be out here buying caviar and imported cheese on a daily basis, but they deserve the dignity and joy brought by having quality, local, healthy, and nourishing foods made more accessible to them by this program. Being someone with a psychiatric disorder, part of my ongoing treatment is making sure I am eating food which is nourishing and nutrient dense. While I was on SNAP this was only made possible by the Bonus Bucks program. I cannot be the only person in this situation, but it is not cheap to eat healthy or organic - this support is vital. It has a direct impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of Rhode Islanders. We are also the only state in New England NOT providing funding for a program like this. We need to do better in making this state affordable to live in and a place where people can live with the dignity provided by good food. Please support this bill.