



May 22, 2025

The Honorable Marvin Abney, Chair  
House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island House of Representatives  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**SUBJECT: Support for House Resolution 5536**

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the Committee:

The American Heart Association would like to voice support for House Resolution 5536, RESOLUTION MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$200,000 TO BE USED FOR INCENTIVES FOR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES SOLD AT PARTICIPATING BONUS BUCKS OUTLETS IN RHODE ISLAND, by Representative Donovan, and we thank the committee for the opportunity to submit testimony.

The American Heart Association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. Heart disease is the No. 1 killer worldwide, and stroke ranks second globally. Even when those conditions don't result in death, they cause disability and diminish quality of life. We want to see a world free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. Our mission is to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.

House Resolution 5536 authorizes the appropriation of \$200,000 for the Farm Fresh Bonus Bucks Program. Bonus Bucks are nutrition incentives that expand on USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits by matching funds for the purchase of nutritious, locally grown, fresh fruits and vegetables. Bonus Bucks are offered at local farmers markets, farm stands, and delivery programs across Rhode Island. This vital program makes fresh healthy foods accessible and affordable for low-income families by doubling the value of SNAP dollars to spend on locally sourced produce.

The majority of SNAP benefits go to households with children, older adults, or those with disabilities.<sup>i</sup> The Farm Fresh Bonus Bucks Program addresses a critical need as families in our state struggle to put healthy food on the table. SNAP nutrition incentives reduce food insecurity and promote healthy communities. SNAP incentives ensure that SNAP recipients have greater access to nutritious foods and help encourage the purchase of more fruits and vegetables. SNAP incentive programs like Bonus Bucks help families buy healthier options, which means that children are taught healthy behaviors, establishing lifelong habits that will support their overall health and wellness.<sup>ii</sup>

Please support House Resolution 5536 and include \$200,000 in the FY26 Budget for the Farm Fresh Bonus Bucks Program to ensure access to fresh fruits and vegetables for Rhode Islanders struggling to feed themselves and their families.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Megan Tucker  
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Eastern States  
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<sup>i</sup> Cronquist K. Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2019. 2021.

<sup>ii</sup> Hilary Hoynes, Diane Schanzenbach, Douglas Almond, "Long-Run Impacts of Childhood Access to the Safety Net," American Economic Review 106, no. 4 (2016): 903-34