



May 26, 2026

The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma
Senate Committee on Finance
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

SUBJECT: Support for Senate Resolution 3312

Dear Chair DiPalma and Members of the Committee:

The American Heart Association would like to voice strong support for Senate Resolution 3312, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$4,800,000 TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) EAT WELL, BE WELL REWARDS PROGRAM, by President Lawson, and we thank the committee for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Rhode Island's Eat Well, Be Well Incentive Program rewards health-conscious food purchases for customers using SNAP benefits. The program works by giving customers \$.50 in SNAP benefits for every \$1 spent on qualifying fruits and vegetables at participating retailers. All SNAP recipients are automatically enrolled in the program. The additional benefits, up to \$25 a month, are loaded to the customer's EBT card for the future purchase of qualifying SNAP products at in-store locations.

High food prices continue to take a toll on both low-income and moderate-income families across Rhode Island. According to findings from the 2025 *RI Life Index*, a study conducted by Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island and the Brown University School of Public Health, food insecurity remains high, with 34% of households reporting that they cannot afford adequate food.ⁱ The risk of hunger is even greater for households with children at 40%.ⁱⁱ

The majority of SNAP benefits go to households with children, older adults, or those with disabilities.ⁱⁱⁱ SNAP incentives – like those provided by the Eat Well, Be Well Incentive Program – promote healthy communities and reduce food insecurity. SNAP incentives ensure SNAP participants have greater access to nutritious foods and help encourage the purchase of more fruits and vegetables. SNAP incentive programs help families buy healthier options, which means that children are taught healthy behaviors, establishing lifelong habits that will support their overall health and wellness.^{iv} Additionally, SNAP incentives can increase spending on fruits and vegetables in grocery stores, which generates economic growth. Every \$5 spent using SNAP generates as much as \$9 in economic activity.^v

The Eat Well, Be Well Incentive Program was funded in 2022 with an \$11.5 million appropriation from the RI General Assembly with funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). As of May 2026, the original pilot funding for this program is nearly exhausted. According to an evaluation done by the RI Public Health Institute, over 106,000 Rhode Island households benefited from Eat Well, Be Well, 70% of users said they ate more fruits and vegetables because of the program, and 70% of parents said it helped their kids eat more fruits and vegetables.

Please support Senate Resolution 3312 and continue funding the Eat Well, Be Well Incentive Program that is increasing access to healthy fruits and vegetables for Rhode Islanders struggling to feed themselves and their families.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Megan Tucker
Region Senior Director, Field Advocacy
American Heart Association
megan.tucker@heart.org

ⁱ *RI Life Index* – Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island; Brown University School of Public Health, 2025. <https://rilifeindex.org/>

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*

ⁱⁱⁱ Cronquist K. Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2019. 2021.

^{iv} 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

^v <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details?pubid=44749>