

Dear members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I write in strong support of Senate Resolution 3312, which calls to appropriate funding to continue Rhode Island's successful **Eat Well, Be Well** retail SNAP Incentive Program.

I was proud to join fellow leaders and advocates in the push to fund this program in 2022, and I was thrilled to see it officially come to life in its pilot phase in 2024. By offering SNAP beneficiaries 50 cents in additional SNAP benefits for every \$1 they spend on fresh fruits and vegetables, the Eat Well, Be Well program has had an immediate impact in helping families all across the state put healthy, nutritious food on their tables.

Since its launch, more than 100,000 households have utilized the Eat Well, Be Well program, earning up to \$25 per month per household in additional benefits. For families who need to track every dollar spent at the grocery store, this represents significant savings. Without this resolution, though, the program is slated to sunset on June 30, 2026.


Food insecurity is (and has been for years) one of Rhode Island's most pressing challenges – and (again, as it has for years) this issue is disproportionately affecting Black and Brown communities. According to the Rhode Island Community Food Bank's 2025 status report on hunger, 50% of Black households and 58% of Hispanic households experience food insecurity.

As the cost of food continues to increase, and as sweeping changes to federally funded safety net programs come to fruition, it will not be surprising to see this problem get worse before it gets better. That is why it is so important in the short term for Rhode Island to invest in proven, effective, low-barrier tools like the Eat Well, Be Well program that provide immediate assistance to families who need it most.

Launching Eat Well, Be Well – a first-of-its-kind program at the state level in the U.S. – was a strong, national showing of leadership from the State of Rhode Island. I urge members of the Committee to show it again by approving this resolution to keep this important initiative active.

I applaud Senate President Val Lawson for introducing this resolution and for her long-term attention to the issue of hunger in Rhode Island, and I thank all members of this Committee for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jim Vincent