



May 26, 2026

Rhode Island Senate Finance Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for Senate Resolution 3312, for the Continuation of the SNAP Eat Well, Be Well Incentive Program

Dear Chair and Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of Progreso Latino, Inc., based in Central Falls, Rhode Island, I respectfully write to express our strong support for the continuation and long-term funding of Rhode Island's SNAP Eat Well, Be Well (EWBW) incentive program beyond its scheduled sunset date of June 30, 2026.

For decades, Progreso Latino has served low-income families, immigrants, seniors, and working households throughout Central Falls and neighboring communities. Every day, we witness the difficult choices families must make between affordability and nutrition. The Eat Well, Be Well initiative has been one of the most practical and dignified policy responses we have seen to address food insecurity while simultaneously promoting healthier eating habits.

Eat Well, Be Well provides SNAP recipients with an additional 50 cents in benefits for every dollar spent on qualifying fruits and vegetables, up to \$25 monthly. This approach directly lowers one of the greatest barriers to healthy eating for low-income families: cost. Approximately 140,000 SNAP recipients benefit from this program statewide.

The communities served by Progreso Latino experience disproportionately high rates of food insecurity, diet-related illness, diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. While long-term statewide obesity outcome data specific to the pilot is still emerging, extensive public health research consistently demonstrates that produce incentive programs increase fruit

and vegetable purchasing and consumption among SNAP households. Rhode Island's own program rollout recognized that healthier foods are often financially out of reach for struggling families and that incentives can improve access to nutritious options.

This program has normalized healthy food purchasing without creating additional bureaucracy or stigma for participants. Families automatically receive the incentive at checkout, making the process simple, accessible, and effective. We have heard directly from residents who report being able to purchase more fresh produce for their children, experiment with healthier meals, and stretch their grocery budgets further during periods of rising food costs.

In communities like Central Falls, where many residents are working multiple jobs and navigating rising housing and utility costs, programs such as Eat Well, Be Well are not luxuries. They are essential investments in preventative public health and family stability.

The State has already made a substantial investment in launching this innovative pilot. Allowing the program to expire now would interrupt momentum, reduce healthy food access for thousands of Rhode Islanders, and undermine a promising statewide model that has received positive public response and national attention.

We respectfully urge the Senate Finance Committee to prioritize continued funding for the Eat Well, Be Well program in the FY2027 budget and to explore opportunities for permanent implementation and expansion, including broader retailer participation and enhanced community outreach in high-need areas.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to the health and wellbeing of Rhode Island families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mario Bueno', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mario Bueno  
Executive Director  
Progreso Latino, Inc.  
Central Falls, Rhode Island  
401-728-5920 x 119