To: Honorable Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Jesse Arreguín and Councilmembers Rigel Robinson and Ben Bartlett


RECOMMENDATION

BACKGROUND
In 2017, an estimated 1 in 8 Americans, or 40 million people, were food insecure. Food insecurity, according to the US Department of Agriculture, is defined as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. This is caused by a lack of available financial resources for food. Climate change is expected to increase the cost of food in the coming decades as crop failures become more frequent. This will place further strain on the most vulnerable communities who are already struggling to pay for food.

Currently, adults without children between the ages of 18-49 and do not have a documented disability are limited to three months of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits if they are not working at least 80 hours a month. This places millions of people who are unable to find stable employment at risk of being unable to have adequate access to food. H.R. 2809, the Improving Access to Nutrition Act of 2019, introduced by Congressperson Barbara Lee, removes the three month limit to SNAP benefits.

Many of the people who are limited to the current three month restriction for SNAP benefits are students. A 2017 report from the UC Global Food Initiative revealed that 44% of undergraduates and 26% of graduate students throughout the UC system were food insecure. Students that are transfer students, former foster care youth, low socioeconomic status, independent, LGBTQ, and/or a part of an underrepresented minority are more likely to be disproportionately represented as food insecure. The UC Berkeley Food Pantry has seen a ten-fold increase in traffic between 2016-2018. According to the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey, 1 in 5 UC Berkeley students have reported skipping meals due to financial reasons. While some financial aid and food programs help fill in some of the gaps student faces, it is clear that reforming the SNAP program will provide much needed support to food insecure students.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
None.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
Not applicable.

CONTACT PERSON
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Councilmember Rigel Robinson 510-981-7170

Attachments:
1: Resolution
2: Text of H.R. 2809
RESOLUTION NO. ##.###-N.S.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 2809 – THE IMPROVING ACCESS TO NUTRITION ACT OF 2019

WHEREAS, food insecurity, defined as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life, impacts an estimated 1 in 8 Americans, equating to 40 million people; and

WHEREAS, with food prices expected to rise in the coming years and decades in part due to climate change’s impact on food crops, it is expected that food insecurity will become a bigger issue, disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS, many students are impacted by food insecurity, with a 2017 report from the UC Global Food Initiative revealing that 44% of undergraduates and 26% of graduate students across the UC system are food insecure; and

WHEREAS, students that are transfer students, former foster care youth, low socioeconomic status, independent, LGBTQ, and/or a part of an underrepresented minority are more likely to be disproportionately represented as food insecure; and

WHEREAS, at UC Berkeley, 1 in 5 students have reported skipping meals due to financial reasons; and

WHEREAS, currently, adults without children between the ages of 18-49 and do not have a documented disability are limited to three months of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits if they are not working at least 80 hours a month; and

WHEREAS, these restrictions disproportionately impact students and adults without stable employment; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 2809, the Improving Access to Nutrition Act of 2019, introduced by Congressperson Barbara Lee, removes the three month limit to SNAP benefits.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that it hereby supports H.R. 2809 – the Improving Access to Nutrition Act of 2019.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be sent to Congressperson Barbara Lee, Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris, and President Donald Trump.
116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION  
H. R. 2809

To amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to repeal the particular work requirement that disqualifies able-bodied adults for eligibility to participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 16, 2019

Ms. Lee of California (for herself, Ms. Moore, Ms. Adams, Mrs. Kirkpatrick, Mr. Grijalva, Mr. Rush, Ms. Norton, Ms. Wilson of Florida, Ms. Omar, Mr. Khanna, Mrs. Napolitano, Mr. DeSaulnier, Mr. Espaillat, Ms. Pressley, Mrs. Watson Coleman, Mr. Engel, Mr. Blumenauer, Ms. Haaland, Ms. Eshoo, Mr. Payne, Mr. Cárdenas, Mr. Huffman, Mr. Cohen, and Mr. Correa) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to repeal the particular work requirement that disqualifies able-bodied adults for eligibility to participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
4 This Act may be cited as the “Improving Access to
5 Nutrition Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS.

(a) Work Requirement.—Section 6 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015) is amended—

(1) in subsections (d)(4)(B)(ii)(I)(bb), (d)(4)(N)(iii)(I)(bb), (d)(4)(N)(iv)(II), and (d)(4)(N)(v)(IV) by striking “or subsection (o)”, and

(2) by striking subsection (o).

(b) Additional Allocations for States That Ensure Availability of Work Opportunities.—Section 16(h)(1) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2025(h)(1)) is amended by striking subparagraph (E).

(c) Technical Amendments.—

(1) Section 7(i)(1) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2016(i)(1)) is amended by striking “section 6(o)(2) of this Act or”.

(2) Section 16(h) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2025(h)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) by striking “that—” and all that follows through “(i)”, and

(II) by striking “; and” and all that follows through “6(o)”, and

(ii) in subparagraph (F)(ii)(III)(ee)(AA) by striking “, individ-
uals subject to the requirements under section 6(o),”’, and

(B) in paragraph (5)(C)—

(i) in clause (ii) by inserting “and” at the end, and

(ii) in clause (iii) by striking “; and” and all that follows through “appropriate”.

SEC. 3. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.


(1) by striking “family—” and all that follows through “(I)” and inserting “family”, and

(2) by striking “, or” and all that follows through “of 2008”.

(b) WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.—The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 103(a)(2) by striking subparagraph (D), and

(2) in section 121(b)(2)(B) by striking clause (iv).

SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICATION OF AMENDMENTS.

(a) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Except as provided in subsection (b), this Act and the amendments made by this
Act shall take effect 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) Application of Amendments.—

(1) The amendments made by section 2 shall not apply with respect to an allotment issued under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) before the effective date of this Act.

(2) The amendments made by section 3(a) shall not apply to individuals hired before the expiration of the 90-day period that begins on the effective date of this Act.