



MINNESOTA BUDGET PROJECT

An initiative of
the Minnesota Council
of Nonprofits

Representative Jeff Howe
Minnesota House of Representatives
527 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

April 10, 2018

Re: House File 118

Dear Representative Howe:

The Minnesota Budget Project is writing to express our opposition to House File 118, which would create restrictive asset limits in Minnesota's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and harm many Minnesotans. This bill harms Minnesotans seeking basic nutrition, will create a burdensome new administration requirement, and make it more difficult for people to climb out of poverty. In addition, this bill is in conflict with other goals the Legislature is seeking to forward.

Asset limits create a new burdensome paperwork process for the state and counties to administer. This takes important time and resources away from providing services to people accessing SNAP that will allow low-income individuals and families to get back on their feet faster.

Many Minnesotans are just one catastrophe away from needing resources such as SNAP. The loss of a job, housing, or child care can put hardworking individuals and families in an unexpectedly difficult financial position. This House File 118 will make it harder for these Minnesotans to get back on their feet and move toward financial security by requiring them to spend the majority of their savings and lose other assets, before can get help to put nutritious food on their table.

This bill is particularly detrimental to Minnesota's low-income seniors. Low-income seniors on fixed incomes will be required to deplete what modest savings they have set aside to pay for housing or long-term care needs. Requiring seniors to drain these assets in order to get nutritious food is counter-productive.

Furthermore, this bill will make it harder for Minnesotans to obtain economic security. Asset limits discourage savings, which is essential for low-income individuals and families seeking to move out of poverty. Savings allow people to weather a car breakdown, loss of housing, or temporary lapse in employment.

Ultimately, this bill will be counter-productive to many of the goals expressed by the Legislature. Not only will it increase government bureaucracy but it also moves Minnesota backwards on things like

ensuring all children get a good start to life and encouraging people to build assets and savings. For these reasons, the Minnesota Budget Project strongly opposes House File 118.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Orange', written over a horizontal line.

Sarah Orange
Minnesota Budget Project Policy Advocate
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
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St. Paul, MN 55114