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SENATE BILL NO. 1018

Offered January 8, 2025

Prefiled January 7, 2025

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 23.1-409.1 and 63.2-801 of the Code of Virginia, relating to public institutions of higher education; Department of Social Services; SNAP eligibility, applications, and participation; guidance, resources, and education.

Patrons—Roem; Delegates: Bennett-Parker and Price

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 23.1-409.1 and 63.2-801 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 23.1-409.1. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; notice to students.

Each public institution of higher education shall ensure that all students have access to accurate information about the information sheet on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) developed and provided by the Department of Social Services pursuant to subsection F of § 63.2-801 is provided to each student enrolled in such institution at the beginning of the fall semester of each school year or, including eligibility and how to apply in the case of any student who enrolls after the beginning of the fall semester, as soon as practicable after enrollment. Each institution shall also advertise the application and process for applying for SNAP prominently on the institution's website and provide such information sheet in any orientation materials that are distributed to each new student.

§ 63.2-801. SNAP benefits program.

A. The Board is authorized, in accordance with the federal Food Stamp Act, to implement a SNAP benefits program in which each political subdivision in the Commonwealth shall participate. Such program shall include participation in the Restaurant Meals Program and shall be administered in conformity with the Board regulations.

B. To the extent authorized by federal law and regulations, the Board shall (i) establish broad-based categorical eligibility for SNAP benefits in accordance with 7 C.F.R. § 273.2(j)(2), (ii) set the gross income eligibility standard for SNAP benefits at 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, and (iii) not impose an asset limit for eligibility for SNAP benefits.

C. Except as otherwise provided in federal law or regulations, the Department may not require persons who are applying to participate or renewing their participation in the SNAP benefits program to appear in person as a condition of participation.

D. The Board shall increase opportunities for self-sufficiency through postsecondary education by allowing SNAP benefits program participants, to the greatest extent allowed by federal law and regulations, to satisfy applicable employment and training requirements through enrollment in an accredited public institution of higher education or other postsecondary school licensed or certified by the Board of Education or the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. The Board shall (i) identify postsecondary education opportunities in the Commonwealth that meet the definition of "employment and training program" as set forth in 7 C.F.R. § 271.2 and the definition of "career and technical education" as set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 2302; (ii) average a SNAP benefits program participant's classroom and study hours on a monthly basis to determine whether the SNAP benefits program participant has met applicable education hour requirements; (iii) deem a SNAP benefits program participant who is approved for a federal or state work study position but who has not yet been placed in a work study position to have satisfied applicable employment and training requirements, as permitted under federal law; (iv) create a standardized form and process for SNAP benefits program participants to verify compliance with education requirements; (v) allow accredited public institutions of higher education or other postsecondary schools licensed or certified by the Board of Education or the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to apply for SNAP ET third party reimbursement designation through the established procurement process; and (vi) establish and make available to SNAP benefits program participants materials that provide clear guidance regarding satisfaction of employment and training requirements through postsecondary education.

E. The Department shall develop, annually update, and provide to each school board in advance of the start of each school year an information sheet on the SNAP benefits program that sets forth the application process and such other information as the Department deems necessary or appropriate in order to properly inform the parents of students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools of such program and encourage application by those who are eligible.

F. The Department shall develop, annually update, and provide to each public institution of higher education in advance of the start of each school year an information sheet on the SNAP benefits program that

59 *sets forth the application process, includes guidance on the employment and training requirements that*  
60 *students enrolled in public institutions of higher education are required to satisfy in order to receive SNAP*  
61 *benefits and opportunities for self-sufficiency through post-secondary education available pursuant to*  
62 *subsection D, and includes any other information as the Department deems necessary or appropriate in*  
63 *order to properly inform students in public institutions of higher education of such program and encourage*  
64 *application by those who are eligible.*

65 **2. That the Department of Social Services (the Department) shall provide information, resources, and**  
66 **education to faculty members employed by each public institution of higher education in student**  
67 **support, student services, and relevant administrative positions regarding outreach opportunities for**  
68 **providing assistance to students enrolled in public institutions of higher education with completing**  
69 **SNAP applications. Such information, resources, and education shall include information regarding**  
70 **the process for public institutions of higher education to enter into a contract with the Department to**  
71 **provide assistance to students with completing SNAP applications.**