

HB 581 & SB 1016

Detrimental Consequences of Reinstating SNAP Asset Limits

HB 581 and SB 1016 would impose an asset limit on SNAP recipients. This is an idea that may **sound** good but has consequences that are detrimental to helping families get, and stay, out of poverty and off public assistance.

- Asset limits force families to use up savings and sell assets. Yet studies suggest that even small savings may reduce how long a family needs public assistance.*
- Savings buffer unexpected health costs and allows families to help children go to college.
- If vehicle limits are imposed, the ability of many breadwinners to get to and from work will be constrained. Families also need reliable transportation to get to and from school or child care.
- Asset limits require DCF to spend more time evaluating complicated rules. Plus asset limits have to be documented and verified.
- It is not true that lots of families with significant assets get SNAP in Florida. DCF estimates that an asset test would only affect about 6.8% of recipients. **However, more than half of those losing assistance would be children.** Further, 5.2% of elderly or disabled SNAP recipients would also lose eligibility.

A little about SNAP: SNAP recipients in Florida are mostly families with children (60%). And most live below the poverty level (82%). SNAP is a vital safety net that does exactly what it is intended to do: for each year between 2009 and 2013, SNAP kept 513,000 Floridians out of poverty. 230,000 of those recipients were children. And SNAP is important to Florida's economy. In 2016 alone, SNAP benefits pumped about \$5.2 billion into Florida's economy.