



Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	15-0278R	Version:	0	Name:	Informational Hearing - Changes to Food Supplement Program Benefits Schedule
Type:	City Council Resolution	Status:		Status:	Adopted
File created:	12/7/2015	In control:		In control:	Health Committee
On agenda:		Final action:		Final action:	1/11/2016
Enactment date:		Enactment #:			
Title:	Informational Hearing - Changes to Food Supplement Program Benefits Schedule FOR the purpose of requesting that representatives from the Health Department and the State Department of Human Resources appear before the City Council to discuss the change in the SNAP benefit distribution schedule, the short and long term pluses and minuses of this shift, and what resources are available to assist SNAP recipients who may experience difficulties in feeding their families while the benefit schedule is adjusted.				
Sponsors:	Mary Pat Clarke, President Young, James B. Kraft, Eric T. Costello, Sharon Green Middleton, Bill Henry, Carl Stokes, Brandon M. Scott, Nick Mosby, Robert Curran, William "Pete" Welch, Rochelle Spector				
Indexes:	Benefits, Charge, Food, Informational Hearing, Program, Supplement				
Code sections:					
Attachments:	1. 15-0278R~1st Reader, 2. Health 15-0278R, 3. Food Policy Director 15-0278R, 4. Dept. of Social Services (DHR) 15-0278R, 5. 15-0278R~2nd Reader				

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
1/11/2016	0	City Council	Adopted	
1/11/2016	0	Health Committee	Recommended Favorably	
12/17/2015	0	Health Committee	Recommended Favorably	Pass
12/10/2015	0	The City Council	Refer to Dept. of Health	
12/10/2015	0	The City Council	Refer to Dept. of Social Services	
12/10/2015	0	The City Council	Refer to Food Policy Director	
12/7/2015	0	City Council	Assigned	
12/7/2015	0	City Council	Introduced	

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Clarke

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

Informational Hearing - Changes to Food Supplement Program Benefits Schedule

FOR the purpose of requesting that representatives from the Health Department and the State Department of Human Resources appear before the City Council to discuss the change in the SNAP benefit distribution schedule, the short and long term pluses and minuses of this shift, and what resources are available to assist SNAP recipients who may experience difficulties in feeding their families while the benefit schedule is adjusted.

Recitals

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), called the Food Supplement Program (FSP) in Maryland, formerly known as Food Stamps, helps low-income households buy the food they need for good health. Once a month, benefits for qualified recipients are issued to households on an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card ♦ similar to a debit or credit card ♦ for use in purchasing food.

In order to avoid disruptions to the food distribution system caused by large numbers of people shopping for food in a constricted time period each month, the State has staggered the release of benefits over multiple days for some time now, allotting benefits on a particular day each month to households based on the first letters of the primary recipient's last name.

Until recently, the benefits were delivered over a 10 day period each month. However, the compression of demand into a third of the month continued to cause difficulties for grocers in making out schedules and keeping food in stock. In an effort to address these concerns, the State recently doubled the number of days over which benefits will be distributed from 10 to 20. The shift has been staggered and will be complete by January 2016.

This change is intended to benefit recipients, businesses, and other consumers. The SNAP change will support the businesses by not having a rush of customers for only 2 weeks at a time. The SNAP changes are also intended to benefit recipients and other consumers by reducing wait times at stores and helping to ensure that the grocery stores are stocked with food.

The actual shift in distribution dates may cause waits of up to 5 additional days beyond what recipients generally have between benefit distributions in the initial month of the new schedule. Although this will be only a one time event, there are concerns that it could cause significant hardship for some families, and it is not clear what, if any, steps have been taken to mitigate these concerns.

It is essential that this shift, intended to create long-term benefits for many, not be accomplished in a way that unduly harms some of the most vulnerable of our residents. In order to best assist constituents facing confusion or challenges because of this change, the Council needs to be fully informed about the change in the SNAP distribution schedule, the short and long term benefits and drawbacks of this shift, and what resources are available to assist recipients who may experience difficulties in feeding their families while the benefit schedule is adjusted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council requests that representatives from the Health Department and the State Department of Human Resources appear before it to discuss the change in the SNAP benefit distribution schedule, the short and long term pluses and minuses of this shift, and what resources are available to assist SNAP recipients who may experience difficulties in feeding their families while the benefit schedule is

adjusted.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Human Resources, the Director of the Baltimore City Department of Social Services, the Health Commissioner, the Food Policy Director, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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ccres/SNAP/tw

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ccres/SNAP/tw