

ANALYSIS OF HB 198

[House Bill 198](#) was introduced on May 10, 2023 by Representative Gray, with co-sponsors Representatives Armstrong, McCormick, and Himschoot signed on as co-sponsors. The bill is referred to the House Health & Social Services Committee and then to House Finance. Its short title is “FOOD STAMP PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY”.

AFPC supports this legislation. Ensuring food access to vulnerable Alaskans is a major component of a functional food system, and this legislation aligns with our organization’s vision of a more resilient and food secure Alaska. AFPC strongly supports efforts to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Alaska. When Alaskans apply for SNAP, their benefits are approved for a “certification period”, a set number of months. Simply, this bill would change Alaska’s recertification timeline from 6 months (one of the shortest periods in the nation) to the longest certification period permitted under federal law.

We support this proposed legislation because it will:

- Increase access to SNAP, allowing families facing hunger to more effectively receive assistance
- Reduce government inefficiencies and administrative burden at the Division of Public Assistance to allow for more timely and accurate case management
- Reduce “churn” - where eligible families drop off of SNAP and then apply again after a short break in enrollment. This is expensive, cumbersome, and stressful and extending certification periods is a proven tool in reducing churn.

Find more resources on SNAP and Certification Periods:

[Alaska Legislative Research Services SNAP Application and Recertification Policies](#)

[Alaska Department of Health SNAP Website](#)

[Understanding the Rates, Causes, and Costs of Churning in SNAP \(USDA\)](#)

Updated April 18, 2024