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February 28, 2023

Senator Ben Hansen, Chair, and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee
State Capitol, Lincoln NE

LB84 – (Day) Change provisions relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

SUPPORT – *Please include this position statement from the League of Women Voters of Nebraska as part of the public hearing record for LB84.*

Dear Senator Hansen and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

According to the League of Women Voters of the United States, persons who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate, or for whom jobs are not available have the right to an income and/or services sufficient to meet their basic needs for food, shelter and access to healthcare. The League of Women Voters of Nebraska endorses LB84 as it seeks to make the current gross income eligibility level for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) permanent at 165% of the Federal Poverty Level and to keep thousands of households in need fed past September 2023.

In May 2021, Nebraska enacted a law to increase the gross income eligibility level for SNAP from 130% of the FPL to 165%, making nearly 59,000 more food insecure households eligible to receive assistance (1). The eligibility level is set to return to 130% of the FPL after September 2023, which would leave a sizable portion of food insecure households in Nebraska without the support they need to put food on their tables at a time when all six major food groups purchased by families saw increased prices averaging 11.8% in 2022 (2).

To reduce access to nutrition support in light of rising inflation would be regressive and negatively impact children, those with disabilities, and especially those in our workforce. SNAP supports workers based on their income, favoring earned income over unearned income such as Social Security.

By maintaining the higher eligibility requirements, “the working poor” have a chance to advance in their workplace and build more financial stability. Not only can low-income individuals and their families feed themselves, but for every dollar spent of SNAP benefits, \$1.50 to \$2.00 is generated in the community (1).

The goal of our SNAP funding should be to meet minimum basic needs without driving families further into poverty. By maintaining current eligibility rates, we can invest in families working to make ends meet, benefitting Nebraskans and their communities.

Please advance LB84 to the floor. Thank you for all you do.

Respectfully,

Carol Dennison, Social Policy Action Team, LWNNE
Jill McDermott, Social Policy Director, LWNNE
Rachel Gibson, Vice President-Action, LWNNE
MaryLee Moulton, President, LWNNE

1. Women’s Fund of Omaha. (2023, January). *LB84: Maintaining increased access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*. [LB-84-Maintaining-Increased-Access-to-the-Supplemental-Nutrition-Assistance-Program-SNAP.pdf \(omahawomensfund.org\)](https://www.omahawomensfund.org/LB-84-Maintaining-Increased-Access-to-the-Supplemental-Nutrition-Assistance-Program-SNAP.pdf)

2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, January 17). *Consumer Price Index: 2022 in review*. [Consumer Price Index: 2022 in review : The Economics Daily: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/economics-daily/2023/01/17/consumer-price-index-2022-in-review)