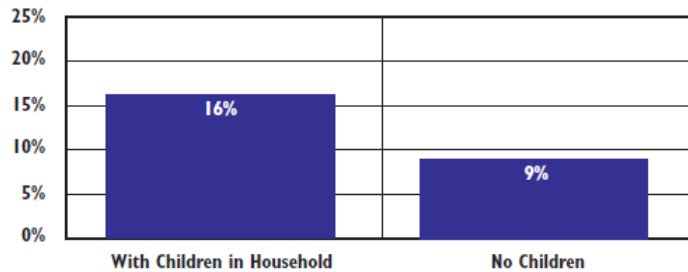


**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**  
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**Testimony Re: S2310- Retail SNAP Incentive Program**  
**Senate Finance Committee**  
**March 29, 2022**  
**Kaitlyn Rabb, Policy Analyst**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its support for Senate Bill 2310. This bill would provide SNAP beneficiaries across the state with a 50% discount on fresh fruits and vegetables when they shop at retail grocery locations. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to thank Senator Lawson for her leadership on this bill and would also like to thank the cosponsors, Senators McCaffrey, DiMario, Goodwin, Valverde, Kallman, Pearson, Euer, Cano, and DiPalma.

**For 1 in 6 Adults With Children,  
Household Lacked Sufficient Food in Last 7 Days**  
SHARE OF U.S. ADULTS REPORTING THAT THEIR HOUSEHOLD SOMETIMES OR OFTEN  
DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT



Source: CBPP analysis of Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey tables for October 28-November 9, 2020.  
Note: Chart excludes individuals who did not respond to the question.

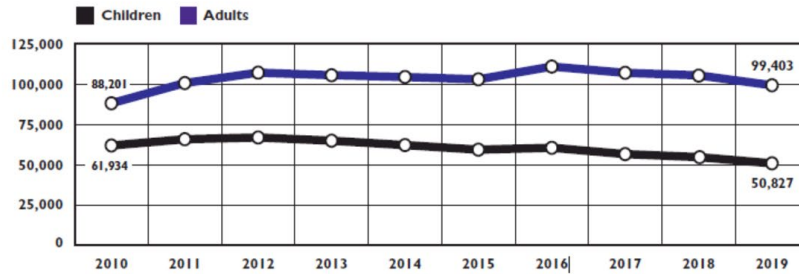
**Food Insecurity for Rhode Island Children:**

Hunger and lack of regular access to sufficient food are linked to serious physical, psychological, emotional, and academic problems in children and can interfere with their growth and development. Between 2017 and 2019, 9.1% of Rhode Island households and 11.1% of U.S. households were food insecure. In 2019, 13.6% of all U.S. households with children were food insecure, while 37.1% of U.S. households with children and incomes below the poverty level experienced food insecurity.

Data from the Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey indicates that households with children are more likely to experience food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic than those without.

## Children Receiving SNAP

### Participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Children and Adults, Rhode Island, 2010-2019



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, 2010–2015 and RI Bridges Database, 2016-2019. Data represent children under age 18 and adults who participated in SNAP during the month of October.

### Benefits of SNAP Incentive programs

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly the Food Stamp Program, helps low-income individuals and families obtain better nutrition through monthly benefits they can use to purchase food at retail stores and some farmers markets. Child food insecurity has been shown to decrease by almost one-third after families receive SNAP benefits for six months. The amount of SNAP benefits families receive is not adequate to meet a family’s nutritional needs.

SNAP Incentive Programs, like the one proposed in this bill, are not new. Similar programs have been implemented with great success in Massachusetts and parts of California, Colorado, Hawaii, Iowa, Michigan, North Carolina, New York, Texas, Washington and in other states and municipalities across the country. Even here in Rhode Island, the idea of SNAP incentives is being implemented by smaller-scale initiatives like the Rhode Island Public Health Institute’s Food on the Move program.

This proposal would allocate \$25 million in *American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)* funds to pilot a statewide Retail SNAP Incentive Program in Rhode Island. This initiative would provide the more than 144,000 SNAP beneficiaries across Rhode Island with a 50% discount on fresh produce at retail grocery stores, making an immediate impact in incentivizing healthier behaviors in our most vulnerable communities, and implementing an important strategy for addressing the hunger crisis. Thank you for your leadership on this issue and for the opportunity to testify.

