

TITLE-IV—NUTRITION PROGRAM SECTION-BY-SECTION

SEC.4001.RENAMING THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM.

Amends the Food Stamp Act by renaming the Food Stamp Program the “Secure Nutrition Access Program”.

SEC.4002.CONTINGENT FUNDS RELATING TO STRENGTHENING THE FOOD PURCHASING POWER OF LOW-INCOME AMERICANS.

- If offsetting funding is available, amends Section 5(e)(1) of the Food Stamp Act, by increasing the standard deduction for food stamp households and indexing it for inflation.
- Raises the standard deduction to not less than \$156 (the 48 contiguous States and the District of Columbia), \$267 (Alaska), \$220 (Hawaii), \$137 (Virgin Islands), and \$313 (Guam). [Note: Under current law the standard deduction is not less than \$134 (the 48 contiguous States and the District of Columbia), \$229 (Alaska), \$189 (Hawaii), \$118 (Virgin Islands), and \$269 (Guam)].

SEC.4003.CONTINGENT FUNDS RELATING TO CHILD CARE EXPENSES.

If offsetting funding is available, amends Section 5(e)(3)(A) of the Food Stamp Act by lifting the cap on dependent care. [Note: Under current law the maximum deduction allowable is \$200 for each child under two years of age, and \$175 for each child over two].

SEC.4004.CONTINGENT FUNDS RELATING TO EXCLUSION OF COMBAT-RELATED MILITARY PAY FROM COUNTABLE INCOME.

If offsetting funding is available, amends Section 5(d) of the Food Stamp Act by excluding combat-related military pay from countable income, with respect to the Food Stamp program.

SEC.4005.CONTINGENT FUNDS RELATING TO EXCLUSION OF EDUCATION ACCOUNTS FROM COUNTABLE FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

If offsetting funding is available, amends Section 5(g) of the Food Stamp Act by excluding qualified tuition programs and Coverdell Education Savings Accounts from countable financial resources, with respect to the Food Stamp program.

SEC.4006.CONTINGENT FUNDING RELATING TO ALLOWABLE COUNTABLE RESOURCES.

If offsetting funding is available, amends Section 5(g) of the Food Stamp Act by indexing for inflation the asset limits for food stamp households. [Note: current law sets the allowable amounts of financial resources (liquid and nonliquid assets) that an eligible food stamp household may own at \$2,000; in the case of an eligible food stamp household that consists of or includes an elderly or disabled member the amount is \$3,000.

SEC.4007.CONTINGENT FUNDS RELATING TO EXCLUSION OF RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS FROM COUNTABLE FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

If offsetting funding is available, amends Section 5(g) of the Food Stamp Act by excluding retirement accounts from countable financial resources, with respect to the Food Stamp program.

SEC.4008.DEOBLIGATE FOOD STAMP COUPONS.

- Amends the Food Stamp Act to prohibit States from issuing coupons, stamps, certificates or authorization cards, effective upon enactment of the 2007 farm bill.
- Provides that effective one year after enactment of the 2007 farm bill, only EBT cards will be eligible for exchange at retail food stores, and further provides that coupons will no longer be an obligation of the Federal government effective one year after enactment of the farm bill, thereby requiring that coupons be redeemed within that one-year period.

SEC.4009. ALLOW FOR THE ACCRUAL OF BENEFITS.

Amends the Food Stamp Act by authorizing State agencies to establish procedures for recovering electronic benefits from a household due to inactivity in the account. Under the provision, a State agency may recover such benefits if an account has been inactive for three months during which it continuously had a balance greater than \$1,000, or if the account has been inactive for twelve months, whichever is less.

SEC.4010.STATE OPTION FOR TELEPHONIC SIGNATURE.

- Authorizes State agencies to establish a system for applicant households to sign an application by providing a recorded, verbal assent over the telephone.
- The provision sets requirements for such a system, including that a system records the verbal assent, as well as the information to which the assent was given.
- The State system must include safeguards against impersonation and identity theft; does not preclude the right of a household to apply in writing; if there any errors, applicants return a written copy of the signed application with instructions correcting them; and applicants must satisfy all requirements associated with a written signature on an application to ensure that the verbal assent triggers the effective date of the submission of the application.

SEC.4011. REVIEW OF MAJOR CHANGES IN PROGRAM DESIGN.

Amends the Food Stamp Act to specify the State agency employees that are authorized to represent the State in any communications with prospective food stamp applicants, food stamp applicants, or recipient households; participate in making determinations regarding a household's compliance with the Food Stamp Act; or make any other determinations required under this subsection.

SEC.4012.GRANTS FOR SIMPLE APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION SYSTEMS AND IMPROVED ACCESS TO BENEFITS.

- Extends, through 2012, the authority of the Secretary to make grants available to pay the costs for eligible entities to develop and implement:
 - simple food stamp application and eligibility determinations; or
 - measures to improve access to benefits by eligible households.

SEC.4013.CIVIL MONEY PENALTIES AND DISQUALIFICATION OF RETAIL FOOD STORES AND WHOLESALE FOOD CONCERNS.

- Increases the civil money penalty for retail stores and wholesale food concerns to \$100,000 for violations that the Secretary determines would cause hardship to food stamp households.
- Changes the period of a disqualification for a first violation to a period that is “not to exceed five years”. [Note: Current law sets the period for a first violation as “no less than six months nor more than five years”].
- Changes the period of a disqualification for a second violation to a period that is “not to exceed ten years”. [Note: Current law sets the period for a second violation as “no less than twelve months nor more than ten years”].
- Requires the Secretary, in consultation with USDA’s Inspector General, to establish procedures whereby retail food stores and wholesale food concerns may be immediately suspended – pending an administrative appeal – from participating in the food stamp program.

SEC.4014. PREVENTING MAJOR SYSTEMS FAILURES.

Amends the disposition of claims under the Food Stamp Program, providing the Secretary with the discretion to determine that a State agency overissued benefits to a substantial number of households as the result of a systemic error by the State. Upon making such a determination, the Secretary may prohibit the State from collecting the overissuances from the households and require the State to reimburse the Secretary for the overissuances.

SEC.4015.FUNDING OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS.

Amends the Food Stamp Act by extending to 2012 funds provided to States for employment and training programs for food stamp recipients.

SEC.4016.REDUCTIONS IN PAYMENTS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.

Extends through 2012, Section 16(k)(3) of the Food Stamp Act, which provides that the Secretary of Agriculture reduce payments to States for administrative costs associated with the food stamp program, in the amount which States are reimbursed under the Social Security Act for administering such program.

SEC.4017. RESEARCH PROJECTS.

Extends through October 1, 2012, pilot projects that improve the delivery of food stamp benefits, which have been operating since October 1981 and involve cash payments to households whose members are 65 years or over or entitled to supplemental security income benefits.

SEC.4018.AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Reauthorizes appropriations to carry out the Food Stamp Act through 2012.

SEC.4019.CONOLIDATED BLOCK GRANTS FOR PUERTO RICO AND AMERICAN SAMOA.

Amends the Food Stamp Act by extending to 2012 block grants to Puerto Rico and American Samoa to administer their nutrition assistance programs.

SEC.4020.STUDY ON COMPARABLE ACCESS TO FOOD STAMP BENEFITS FOR PUERTO RICO.

Amends the Food Stamp Act by requiring the Secretary to conduct a study on the feasibility of including Puerto Rico in the Food Stamp Program. [Note: In 1982 Puerto Rico replaced the Food Stamp Program with a block grant program, called the Nutrition Assistance Program].

SEC.4021. REAUTHORIZATION OF AND INCREASED FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECT COMPETITIVE GRANTS.

- Amends the Food Stamp Act to limit grants under the community food project to be no more than \$30 million for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.
- Increases the Federal share of the cost of the grants from not greater than 50 percent to not greater than 75 percent of the cost of the project, and extends the maximum term of a grant from three to five years.
- The Section expands the list of preferences for selecting community food projects to include those projects that serve special needs in transportation and processing for emergency food service, access to underserved markets, integration of urban and metro-area food production, and technical assistance for youth, socially disadvantaged individuals, and groups with limited resources.

SEC.4201.AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Amends section 204(a)(1) of the Emergency Assistance Act, by increasing the authorization of appropriations to \$100 million for the direct and indirect costs to States related to the processing, storage, transporting, and distribution of commodities.

SEC.4202.CONTINGENT FUNDS RELATING TO COMMODITIES FOR THE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOOD PROGRAM.

If offsetting funding is available, amends Section 27(a) of the Food Stamp Act increasing to \$250 million and indexing the mandatory funding for commodities made available for the Emergency Assistance Food Program (TEFAP).

SEC.4203.DISTRIBUTION OF SURPLUS COMMODITIES; SPECIAL NUTRITION PROJECTS.

Amends section 1141(a)(2)(A) of the Agriculture and Food Act, by extending through 2012 the availability of surplus commodities, to be made available without charge or credit, to nutrition projects under the authority of the Older Americans Act, to child nutrition programs providing food service, and to food banks participating in special nutrition projects.

SEC.4204.COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM.

- Extends, through 2012, the Secretary's authority to purchase and distribute agricultural commodities for food assistance programs, including but not limited to institutions (including hospitals and facilities caring for needs of infants and children), supplemental feeding programs serving women, infants, and children or elderly persons, or both.
- Extends, through, 2012, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), which provides commodity packages to low-income pregnant and breastfeeding women, other new mothers up to one year postpartum, infants, children up to six years of age, and elderly people who are at least 60 years old.

SEC.4301.EXPANSION OF DOD FRESH PROGRAM.

Provides that the Secretary shall not spend less than \$50 million in fiscal year 2008, \$75 million for both fiscal years 2009 and 2010, \$100 million for fiscal year 2011, and \$125 million for fiscal year 2012 for purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables as part of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Program.

SEC.4302.EXPANSION OF FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROGRAM.

- If offsetting funding is available, amends the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to increase funding for the fresh fruit and vegetable program to \$100 million in each of fiscal years 2008 through 2012.
- The Section expands the program from 50 schools in each of eight States to 50 schools in each State, plus additional schools in each State in proportion to the student population of the State.

SEC.4401.SENIORS FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM.

- Extends the senior farmers' market nutrition program at the current level of \$15 million annually, but authorizes the Secretary to use funds up to \$20 million for fiscal year 2008, \$30 million for fiscal year 2009, \$45 million for fiscal year 2010, \$60 million for fiscal year 2011, and \$75 million for fiscal year 2012, subject to availability.
- Provides that honey, in addition to fruits, vegetables and herbs, be included in the program.

SEC.4402.CONGRESSIONAL HUNGER CENTER.

- Establishes the Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship Program and the Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellowship Program in order to encourage future leaders of the United States to pursue careers in humanitarian and public service, to recognize the needs of low-income individuals, and to provide assistance to people in need. The Fellowship programs will seek public policy solutions to the challenges of hunger and poverty, and provide training and development opportunities for future leader.
- Authorizes the Secretary to contract with the Congressional Hunger Center to administer the Fellowship Programs to make Fellowships available.
- Authorizes appropriations in the amount of \$3 million for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2012.