**The Opportunity:** Michigan has the opportunity to join Indiana and 25 other states in eliminating the lifetime ban on food assistance for people with drug felony convictions.

- States are allowed to waive the federal restriction in full or in part and provide Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) support to otherwise qualifying individuals with felony drug convictions.
- 26 states and Washington, D.C. have completely waived the ban, while 22 others, including Michigan, have kept a partial ban in place.
- In Michigan, a person with more than one drug felony conviction arising from separate incidents that occurred after Aug. 22, 1996, is barred from receiving federal assistance for life.

**The Urgency:** The time for changing this outdated law is NOW.

- Due to COVID-19, food insecurity has increased and employment opportunities have dwindled, compounding the existing economic challenges facing Michiganders with felonies on their criminal record.
- This reform will help more Michigan residents and their families weather these tough times.
- Ending the lifetime ban on SNAP for certain individuals with drug felonies also is in-line with the many other bipartisan criminal justice reforms that have already passed or are under consideration by the Michigan Legislature.

**The Action:** The Michigan Legislature has two avenues for action on enacting this change.

- This ban is perpetuated by boilerplate language in the annual Department of Health and Human Services budget—and could be struck down by the Appropriations Subcommittees.
- Standalone legislation would permanently fix this problem. Senate Bill 1006 has been introduced to make this change, and similar legislation is being introduced in the House.
**The Impact:** Passing this reform will have significant benefits for individuals and their families and the state as a whole.

- **Reduces recidivism:** A study\(^1\) based on data from 43 states found that full eligibility for SNAP benefits among drug offenders decreases the probability of returning to prison within one year by 13.1%. Partial eligibility (as Michigan has adopted) has no impact on recidivism.

- **Helps the formerly incarcerated and their families get back on their feet:** Children whose parents have been incarcerated are at a higher risk for food insecurity. Public assistance, including SNAP, helps returning citizens make ends meet when other economic prospects are dire.

- **Puts more money back into local economies:** SNAP benefits are almost always spent locally and hence can help stimulate local economies. Every dollar in new SNAP benefits spent when the economy is weak and unemployment elevated would increase the gross domestic product by $1.54, a recent USDA study estimates.

- **Saves individuals and the state money in other areas:** In Michigan, food insecurity-related healthcare needs cost more than $1.8 billion per year statewide, $1,927 per food-insecure adult per year, $182 per person per year. Improving food security through SNAP could lead to savings in Michigan’s Medicaid program, while increasing food assistance cases costs the state nothing, because SNAP benefits are entirely federally funded.

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**Endnote**