



Public Testimony Presented by
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to the

Joint Legislative Hearing for Human Services

Regarding the Proposed Budget for State Fiscal Year 2027

February 5, 2026

Island Harvest Food Bank supports the proposal in Gov. Kathy Hochul's Executive Budget for State Fiscal Year (SFY) providing funding for chip-enabled electronic benefits transfer (EBT) cards.

We support Member of Assembly Jessica González-Rojas and State Senator Jose Serrano bipartisan bills (A. 699/S. 1465) which will require the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) to implement chip-enabled EBT SNAP benefits cards, bills which are similar to the Governor's proposal.

According to data produced by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), from Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 23 Quarter 4 through FFY 25 Q1, 151,738 136,422 **New York households have submitted claims for stolen SNAP benefits totaling \$80,626,687**. Of the \$422,527,246.17 in stolen SNAP benefits nationwide, **our state represents nearly 20% of the total**.

Converting outdated mag-stripe EBT cards to modern consumer-grade chip/tap cards will dramatically reduce the theft of SNAP benefits. When SNAP benefits are stolen, our neighbors in need face immediate hunger while at the same time every New Yorker has a portion of their tax dollars taken away.

We strongly urge you to support this proposal in the final budget and help make New York a safe and affordable place to live.

Island Harvest Food Bank is a leading regional human services organization whose mission is to end hunger and reduce food waste on Long Island. Our work directly supports seniors,

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children, families, and veterans who turn to us in times of crisis through our direct service, mobile outreach program, and food distribution work. We also support a network of more than 300 community-based nonprofit organizations and emergency feeding programs across Long Island.

I am available to discuss this testimony with any member of these Committees, gregory@islandharvest.org at your convenience.

Thank you.