



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Senator Liz Krueger Blasts City Policy Denying Access to Food Stamps

LIZ KRUEGER February 17, 2009

New York—State Senator Liz Krueger criticized New York City for unnecessarily limiting access to food stamps for needy New Yorkers, and announced that she is introducing legislation (also introduced in the Assembly -- A.04169) that will require the City and State to take full advantage of federal Food Stamp program waivers that allow increased participation in the Food Stamp program. As part of President Obama's economic stimulus bill there was a provision to extend food stamp waivers for able-bodied adults. However, it is currently optional for the State and localities to participate in these waiver programs, and as reported in yesterday's New York Times, the City is continuing to refuse this option.

"I applaud the President and Congress for increasing Food Stamp benefits as part of their efforts to jump start our economy and help states like New York deal with our severe economic burdens," said Senator Krueger. "As food prices soar and the economy plummets, we need to use every option available to maximize benefits and support hungry New Yorkers." Food Stamp benefits are 100% federally funded and are the most successful economic stimulus program available -- every \$1 in Food Stamps translates into over \$1.70 in economic activity in our local economy immediately.

However, under out-dated Federal rules, able bodied adults without children, who are willing to meet Food Stamp Program work requirements but cannot find sufficient employment or available training slots, cannot continue to receive food stamps for more than three months per year, unless the locality applies for a federal waiver. New York City does not currently use its option as a high unemployment jurisdiction to participate in this federal waiver program.

"It makes absolutely no sense for New York City to decline to participate in the federal waiver program," said Senator Krueger. "The program costs the City no money and is a proven tool for stimulating economic growth. If New York City sticks to its outdated policy then New York's hungry will continue to suffer and our economic crisis could very well be prolonged. Clearly in today's economy it is unrealistic to expect every unemployed adult to find work within a three month period. These adults are not trying to avoid work, they just can't find jobs in today's economy."

By requiring the City to participate in the waiver program and estimated 13,000 more New Yorkers will become eligible for food stamps with no cost to the State or City.

Senator Krueger concluded, "Food Stamps are a win/win for our State. Every new dollar in Food Stamps is immediately spent in a neighborhood food store or green market, helps low-income families meet their nutritional needs, and creates jobs in both our urban communities and on our farms."