Taxing Groceries Would Make New Mexico’s Food Insecurity Problem Worse

NEW MEXICO HAS THE HIGHEST CHILDHOOD FOOD INSECURITY RATE IN THE NATION¹

- 26.6% of our children don’t have access to enough nutritious food

CHILDHOOD FOOD INSECURITY IS ASSOCIATED WITH¹:
- Increased risk of developmental delays and chronic disease
- Forgone medical care
- Behavioral and emotional challenges
- Increased disciplinary actions and lower test scores at school
- Lower educational attainment
- Reduced economic mobility

143,660 NEW MEXICO KIDS ARE FOOD INSECURE

That is roughly equivalent to every student in the Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Santa Fe, and Rio Rancho school districts – combined – not having enough reliable access to a sufficient amount of nutritious food

NEW MEXICANS WITH LOW FOOD SECURITY MUST MAKE TRADEOFFS IN ORDER TO GET BY²

- 75% purchase inexpensive, unhealthy food in order to have at least some food at home to eat
- 61% choose between paying utilities or buying food
- 59% Choose between paying for medicine or medical care or buying food
- 48% Choose between paying their rent or mortgage or buying food
LOW WAGES AND POVERTY ARE LARGELY TO BLAME FOR FOOD INSECURITY IN NEW MEXICO

FOOD EATS UP A THIRD OF THE BUDGET FOR FAMILIES EARNING LESS THAN $15,000³

BLACK, NATIVE, AND HISPANIC FAMILIES ARE MORE LIKELY TO EARN LESS THAN $15,000 THAN ARE WHITE AND ASIAN FAMILIES⁴
SNAP beneficiaries collectively spend hundreds of millions of their own money on food – which will become even more expensive if it is taxed.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, New Mexico has seen a surge in families needing food assistance:

- SNAP enrollment increased by more than 10%\(^7\)
- Food insecurity among all New Mexicans has almost doubled\(^8\)

Many SNAP beneficiaries work in industries that have kept the state running during the current pandemic:

- 57% of New Mexico’s SNAP recipients are considered essential workers\(^9\)
  - 47,700 work in the service industry
  - 10,000 are construction workers
  - 5,800 work for manufacturers

The pandemic and economic downturn have also meant a big decline in state revenue from income and gross receipts taxes. As state policymakers look around for new sources of tax revenue, food is likely to be in the crosshairs.

Despite our high rates of food insecurity and poverty, some lawmakers still want to tax food.
Food is the most basic of human necessities. New Mexico’s leaders should be fighting hunger, not making it worse by taxing food.