



ADVOCACY IN ACTION

CHARACTER PACKET

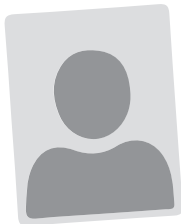
FARMERS MARKET SHOPPER

INSIDE:

- Character Info/Background
- Legislation Draft: Healthy Eating, Here at Home
- SNAP Backgrounder
- Article: One Store Owner Fed Up With Food Stamp Abuse
- Op-ed: Homeless Plan Despoils Award Winning Sugar House Neighborhood

MAZON

A Jewish Response
To Hunger



FARMERS MARKET SHOPPER



BACKGROUND

You are a retired corporate executive and live in an affluent neighborhood across the street from the market where you shop.

You are generally liberal-leaning and will tell people that you support SNAP but are worried that this bill will:

- Create longer lines.
- Bring higher risk of littering, loitering, drug use and crime to your neighborhood, potentially lowering property values.
- Allow SNAP recipients to steal from the farmers market or commit SNAP fraud.

You say things like “I’m worried about the type of crowd this will attract,” but when people ask what you mean you will just list the reasons above, or else say that you’re referring to people “not from the neighborhood.”

You also say that you support people using SNAP having access to produce, but don’t want it in your neighborhood. You will also say that maybe if people really wanted to eat healthy, you shouldn’t have to give it to them for free.



POSITION ON THE BILL

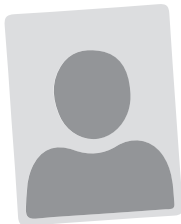
You are against the bill.

- You will fight against Amendment 1, because you believe this will bring more SNAP participants to your farmers’ market.
- You do not care about Amendments 2 or 3.



RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ACTORS

- You are a major donor for Senator A, so you have their ear. You do not have any relationship with Senators B or C.
- You’re friendly with the Farmers’ Market Owner.



FARMERS MARKET SHOPPER



ADDITIONAL GOALS

- Convince the farmer's market owner that they'd lose (your) business if the bill passes.
- Try to use your relationship with Senator A to convince them to vote against the Bill, or at least to vote against Amendment 1.



STATE OF CALISSOURI SENATE

Eighty-Ninth Session

S.B. No. 47

TITLE OF BILL:

Healthy Eating, Here at Home

BE IT ENACTED BY LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF CALISSOURI

1 SECTION 1: BILL DETAILS

2

3 SNAP recipients are able to receive dollar for dollar matching vouchers for SNAP
4 benefits they spend at farmers markets, up to \$10 per week. There is no cap on the
5 number of vouchers farmers markets may give out.

6

7 Farmers market EBT booths will have tokens that SNAP recipients may exchange for
8 EBT dollars.

9

10 Farmers markets will keep logs of how many people use the tokens, and will apply for
11 reimbursement at the end of each month. They may also apply for grants to advertise the
12 voucher program and to pay for the extra administrative cost of running the program.

13

14 Only people already on SNAP can participate in this program.

15

16 The program will be run by End Hunger Now, who will be responsible for administration,
17 outreach, and evaluation.

18

19

20

21 SECTION 2: FUNDING

22

23 The program will receive annual funding of \$500,000 from the Calissouri's budget. This
24 funding goes to a non-profit (End Hunger Now), who will run the program. The money
25 may be spent on:

- 26 ▪ Directly reimbursing farmers markets for vouchers.
- 27 ▪ Advertising/outreach and administration (additional staffing, bookkeeping, etc.)
- 28 grants.

29

30 The money may NOT be spent on:

- 31 ▪ Helping farmers markets to set up booths that except EBT cards (credit cards on
- 32 which SNAP money is loaded).
- 33 ▪ Administration of farmers market EBT booths not directly related to the vouchers
- 34 program.

35

36 The funding is guaranteed for two years, after which End Hunger Now and the State
37 legislature will evaluate the program and determine if it is successful and worth
38 continuing to fund.

39

40 SECTION 3: POTENTIAL AMENDMENTS

41

42 *Amendment 1:* Double the yearly funding, and raise the voucher amount to \$25 / week.

43

44 *Amendment 2:* Instead of a set \$500,000 yearly sum, pay for the bill through 5% sales tax
45 increase (which is calculated by the Calissouri State Budget Office to yield about the
46 same amount of revenue).

47

48 *Amendment 3:* Reinstate work requirements: Unemployed adults without children may
49 only stay on SNAP for 3 months at a time unless they find work.

SNAP BACKGROUNDER

WHAT IS SNAP?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known food stamps, is a government program that helps low income Americans to purchase healthy food. SNAP recipients receive a monthly stipend loaded onto an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, which looks like a credit card and can be used at most grocery stores as well as some convenience stores and farmers markets.

SNAP is a federal program, but it is run by states. It is an entitlement program, meaning that any household that is eligible for the program is entitled to receive benefits, and states are not allowed to turn anybody away because they run out of money. Anybody who meets the eligibility requirements is able to access SNAP.

SNAP participants do not fit one single profile, but many of the people who benefit from SNAP are

- Working part-time or low wage jobs
- Unemployed
- Receiving welfare or other public assistance
- Elderly or disabled
- homeless

The size of the benefit depends on each family's income as well as other factors. In 2016 the average monthly benefit for a family of four was \$471, which translates to \$1.31 per meal per person. SNAP benefits are meant to supplement, rather than replace families' meal budgets.



ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility requirements vary by state, but in general households below 130% the federal poverty line (\$31,980 per year for a family of four in 2016) are eligible to receive SNAP based on their income. Certain expenses, such as childcare payments and medical expenses, are subtracted when

determining income. Households must also pass a resource test, meaning that the value of their eligible assets must be below a certain amount, which in most states is around \$2250, or \$3250 for households with a disabled or elderly family member. Home lot values, SSI and TANF (cash based government assistance programs) benefits, and most pension plans do not count as eligible assets.

Certain SNAP users must comply with work requirements in order to continue to receive benefits. Childless, able-bodied adults who are able to work receive SNAP for a maximum of 3 months in a 36 month period unless they (1) are working at least 20 hours a week, (2) are at least a half-time student, or (3) are enrolled in a job training program. During the Great Recession, when unemployment was high, many states obtained waivers to get rid of the work requirement. In recent years many of those states are deciding to reinstate work requirements.

([Http://Www.Waynetimes.Com](http://www.waynetimes.com))

BREAKING/FEATURED ([HTTP://WWW.WAYNETIMES.COM/CATEGORY/NEWS/](http://www.waynetimes.com/category/news/))

One store owner fed up with Food Stamp abuse

WayneTimes.com (<http://www.waynetimes.com/author/waynetimes/>)

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f (<https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=http://>

t ([https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=One%20store%20owner%20fed%20up%20with%20Food?](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=One%20store%20owner%20fed%20up%20with%20Food%20Stamp%20abuse)

G+ (<https://plus.google.com/share?url=http://www.>



View the Video (http://www.waynetimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/IMG_1431.mov)

Newark Save-A-Lot store owner, Mike Breen, has seen his share of food stamp abuse over the years, but an incident on Monday (12/8) was the straw that broke the camel's back.

A man entered the store with an accomplice, and using his EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) card, purchased five cases of water. He then exited the store and on the side of the store building began emptying the bottles, one by one.

The man intended to empty the bottles of water that cost taxpayers a total of \$18.35, then take the empty bottles back into the store and cash them in for the 5¢ per bottle deposit.

In this case the man would have netted a total of \$6 for his efforts.

The EBT card program is an electronic system that allows State Welfare Departments to issue benefits via a magnetically-encoded payment card. Common benefits provided (in the United States) via EBT are typically of two general categories: food and cash benefits.

Food benefits are federally authorized benefits that can be used only to purchase food and non-alcoholic beverages.

According to Eric Breen, the EBT cards can only be used for food products – no paper, or soap products. Unfortunately, EBT card abusers work the system in order to garner a bit of extra cash, all too often for tobacco, alcohol in stores, or illegal drugs on the streets.

Mike Breen was steamed when seeing EBT users legally use their benefits for non-nutritional items such as snacks and sugared drinks, but the bottle emptying that has been going on for years pushed him over the edge. He recalled one man coming in for 10 cases of water, only to return later with bags of empty water bottles in tow.

With video camera in hand, Mike confronted the man, later identified as Alex Jones, age 21, of Willow Avenue in Newark and told him – in very colorful language – to leave the property.

Breen refused to let Jones back in the store to cash in the bottles he already had emptied. Police were called and Jones and his accomplice were seen leaving the area, carrying cases of water away to the Wegman's store – where they successfully cashed in the empty bottles.

"It was epic, watching these two guys walking down the street carrying the cases of water," recalled Mike.

Jones could have been charged with Food Stamp Abuse under the law, but local courts

are reluctant to come down hard on small-time EBT card abusers. Records show Jones is unemployed.

Wayne County Department of Social Services (DSS) representative Mary Lippert, had heard of empty bottle deposit fraud, and along with other state DSS workers, has rallied for the practice to be covered by the Misuse of Food Stamps law.

Though Jones was not criminally charged by police for the blatant Misuse of Food Stamps, that did not prevent him from being given the choice of an arrest, or signing an agreement disqualifying and suspending himself from the Food Stamp and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs for a period of 12 months.

Wayne County has suspended EBT cards in the past on several occasions, but is sending a strong message to EBT card abusers that they intend to crack down even harder.

Lippert said Wayne County is now instituting a "Fair Hearing Process" in order to get intentional EBT card abusers taken to task.

First time offenders will lose their EBT card for food stamp use for a 6-month period, second time offenders for a year, and a third strike means a lifetime ban from receiving food stamp benefits.

If you have information regarding Public Assistance Fraud, please contact the Sheriff's Office by calling 315.946.9711 or email tip@co.wayne.ny.us.

Op-ed: Homeless plan despoils award-winning Sugar House neighborhood

By Christopher Sveiven

Published: January 16, 2017 04:25PM

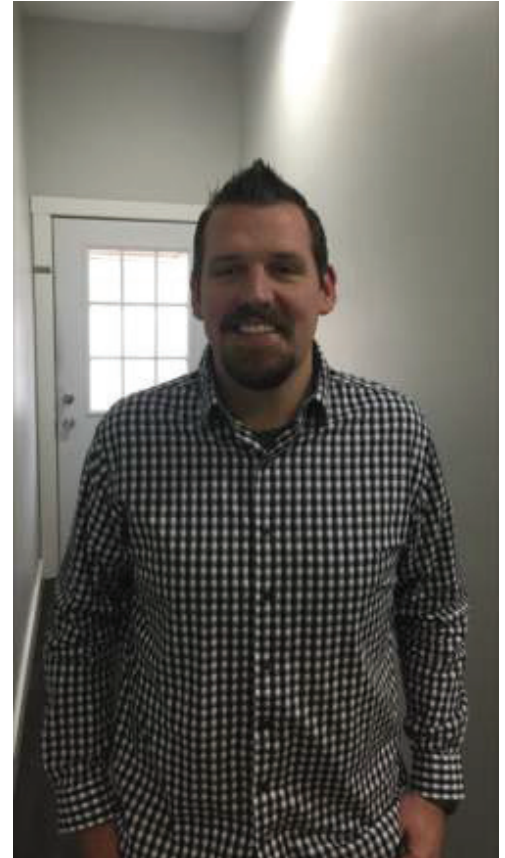
Updated: January 15, 2017 03:48PM

In 2012, the American Planning Association declared Salt Lake City's Sugar House neighborhood, Fairmont, as one of America's Great Neighborhoods. The award was given to the area for planning excellence, history, architecture and community engagement. Salt Lake City seems to have ignored almost everything that makes the neighborhood special and award winning.

Salt Lake City's mayor and council surprised almost everyone in the Sugar House neighborhood by spending \$7 million for a property with an assessed value of \$2.8 million right next to a quiet and inviting single family home neighborhood. The irony in that decision flies in the face of the America's Great Neighborhoods' language that described the neighborhood as having "a decades-long tradition of citizens being engaged in local planning."

When the homeowners and businesses were told about the plan to place a homeless shelter next to their homes, the news was given to them by reporters, not by city elected officials or staff. That disrespect shown to the neighborhood was compounded by the statements of the mayor and council that the neighborhood would not be negatively impacted. But the only example that the city provided for a homeless resource center was the Road Home in the Rio Grande area.

The city has explained that the residents adjacent to the facility would not see drug dealers or crime around the new homeless resource centers because the residents would not be lined up outside the facilities. But, as many service providers have indicated, removing drugs from homeless residents is difficult, if not impossible. The city has been unable to remove the drug dealers from around the Rio Grande area despite a significant police presence. According to



| Courtesy Christopher Sveiven, op-ed mug.

realtor.com, homes near homeless shelters decrease in value 12.7 percent. The 80 violent crime incidents near the YWCA in the last three months don't seem to bother anyone in the city. There were 11 in the same time period in a larger area around Sugar House.

That is just one of the concerns of the neighbors of the proposed homeless facility. Many other homeowners believe that they have lost tens of thousands of dollars of equity and value in their homes. Desperate homeowners and businesses have discussed lawsuits and taking their complaints to the Legislature. Despite the city paying a premium for the Sugar House property, the neighborhood homes and businesses have lost much more in value due to this decision. Salt Lake City has said that they are undertaking a study of the equity loss, but there is no plan to compensate the adjacent neighbors.

After years of planning to use the Sugar House Streetcar to help develop the neighborhood into a more inviting and walkable neighborhood, the city seems to have thrown the recently approved Sugar House Streetcar Corridor Plan out the window. One has to wonder where a homeless shelter sits in a more inviting and walkable mixed-use neighborhood. One of the City Council members agreed that "persuading a neighborhood to accept a shelter will be tough," remembering the backlash against the Inn Between homeless hospice. In addition, there now seems to be a fight in the council about what was planned for the Sugar House site. Originally, the council assumed that the women and children's shelter would be at the Sugar House facility, but after the backlash two of the council members indicated that they were against a homeless resource center next to the adjacent single family home neighborhood.

In the America's Great Neighborhood Award, under Community Engagement, the award listed "Extensive public participation; for 35 years citizens have participated in every planning process affecting the neighborhood."

The homeless site selection process ignored the implied promise that this award-winning neighborhood would continue to be inviting. Sugar House homeowners and businesses deserve protection of one of America's Great Neighborhoods. A homeless shelter in a quiet single family home neighborhood should be the last thing a city should consider.

The homeless sites plan should drop the Sugar House location and the city should save its \$7 million for better uses.

Christopher Sveiven lives in Sugar House and will soon join the Sugar House Community Council.