

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 3, 2026

Kathryn Williams
Deputy Secretary
Florida Department of Children and Families
2415 North Monroe Street
Suite 400
Tallahassee, FL 32303

The Honorable Ron Desantis
Governor
The Capitol
400 South Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Deputy Secretary Williams and Governor DeSantis,

We urgently seek answers regarding an alarming mandate in this year's state budget: The requirement that the state rapidly find an Artificial Intelligence (AI) vendor and finalize, by September 1st, a contract to fix the state's significant Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) error rate.

Florida is in the middle of an extreme affordability crisis. Skyrocketing rental, mortgage, and property insurance costs have led to half of surveyed Floridians considering leaving the state.¹ Florida's level of food insecurity is rising as well and is now at a 10-year high.² These trends have contributed to 60 percent of residents reporting the need to choose which necessities—including food, medicine, housing, and gas—to prioritize and which to do without.³

When President Trump signed his *One Big Beautiful Bill Act* (OBBBA) into law last year, he created requirements that will exacerbate this crisis. The bill requires states with a SNAP error rate above 10 percent to pay 15 percent of the cost of benefits starting as soon as October 2027. Florida's SNAP error rate is 12.97 percent. For our state, the OBBBA would mean a loss of almost \$1 billion in federal SNAP funding,⁴ threatening the food security of millions of Floridians, including seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, and children.

We understand that the state must act urgently to address the impending budgetary crisis created by the OBBBA. However, we are concerned with one of the state's solutions: The appropriation of \$4 million in state funds for the new and relatively unproven technology of AI to identify SNAP errors. Specifically, as enacted in this year's state budget:

From the funds in Specific Appropriation 313, \$4,000,000 in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is provided to the Department of Children and Families to competitively procure a vendor to provide an electronic data analytics solution for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The vendor shall assist the department in reducing the SNAP eligibility determination error rate to a level that eliminates the state share of liability for such errors. The vendor must be capable of providing large-scale analyses of eligibility determinations using

¹ Hailey Samples. "Study reveals nearly half of Floridians eye relocation due to 'affordability crisis'." KATV. November 5, 2025. <https://katv.com/news/nation-world/study-reveals-nearly-half-of-floridians-eye-relocation-due-to-affordability-crisis>.

² "Food Insecurity Rate." Florida Department of Health. July 28, 2026. <https://www.flhealthcharts.gov/ChartsDashboards/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=NonVitalIndRateOnly.TenYrsRpt&cid=9910>.

³ Sofia Baltodano. "'It's overwhelming': Rising food insecurity strains South Florida food banks." Miami Herald. June 8, 2026. <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/article315996054.html>.

⁴ Gabriella Paul. "USDA releases Florida's SNAP error rate. It comes with a \$1B penalty." WUSF National Public Radio. June 26, 2026. <https://www.wusf.org/politics-issues/2026-06-26/usda-releases-florida-snap-error-rate-comes-with-penalty>.

machine learning, identifying and correcting erroneous determinations, identifying root causes of erroneous determinations, and recommending operational improvements to avoid future errors. The vendor's services must operate in conformity with applicable federal and state regulations and SNAP error rate standards promulgated by the department. The department shall complete procurement of the electronic system by September 1, 2026, to maximize federal financial participation.⁵

With our concerns in mind, we ask that you provide answers to the following questions by August 10, 2026:

1. Other than the description within the Florida budget quoted above, what criteria is the state using to determine a qualified vendor?
 - a. What demonstrated and relevant experience does the state require of the vendor?
 - b. What prior measures of proven accuracy in a vendor's AI tools do the state require?
 - c. What safeguards against biases—including cultural, racial, and sexual—do the state require of the vendor's tools?
2. How will the vendor ensure that there is human oversight of any AI decision-making?
 - a. Will data and decision-making processes be available for review by state and federal lawmakers and members of the public, including members of the press?
3. How will the vendor and the state ensure that decisions can be reviewed and appealed by affected SNAP recipients?
4. How will the state ensure that the bidding process is competitive, open, and free of conflicts of interest?
5. Does the state expect to meet the September 1st deadline?
 - a. Does the state have contingency plans if the September 1st deadline is not met?

Sincerely,


Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress


Kathy Castor
Member of Congress


Lois Frankel
Member of Congress


Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress


Darren Soto
Member of Congress

⁵ "House Bill 5001E." The Florida Senate. May 5, 2026. <https://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2026E/5001E/BillText/er/PDF>.



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
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