



Jim Pillen
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Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, and
Members of the Legislature
State Capitol
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, and Members of the Legislature:

With this letter, I am returning LB 319 without my signature and with my objections. Under federal law, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) bans individuals with felony drug convictions from receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Federal law also allows states to modify or remove the ban by enacting legislation.

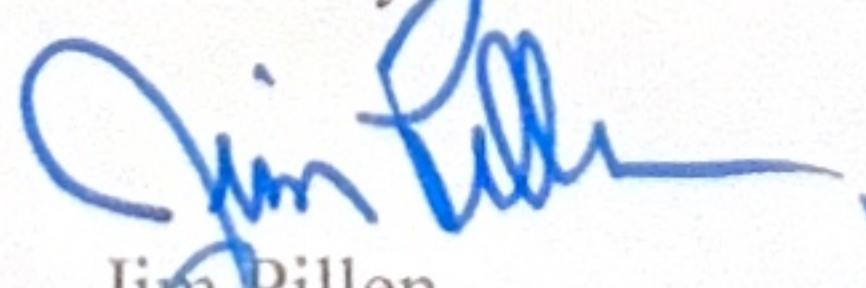
Nebraska already has a modified ban where individuals are eligible for SNAP provided they 1) have less than three felony convictions for the use or possession of a controlled substance, and 2) have completed or are participating in a state-licensed or nationally accredited treatment program after the date of their conviction. Individuals with three or more such felony convictions, as well as those convicted of the sale or distribution of a controlled substance, are ineligible for SNAP benefits. Further, other members of a household may still be eligible for SNAP benefits even if an individual household member is deemed ineligible.

LB 319 would further expand SNAP eligibility to convicted drug dealers and remove the requirement of substance abuse treatment for individuals with one or two felony convictions for possession or use of a controlled substance. It also contains loopholes that could allow habitual offenders with three or more felony convictions to evade the requirement of substance abuse treatment.

Individuals that distribute or sell illicit drugs should not be entitled to tax-payer-funded benefits. And illegal drug users should be required to complete treatment before they receive their third felony conviction.

It is for these reasons that I have decided to veto LB 319.

Sincerely,



Jim Pillen
Governor