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Legislation Filed to Return Summer EBT to Tennessee Year After Year

Nashville, TN, Feb. 9, 2026 – After months of public outcry for Summer EBT and a lack of interest in the program from Governor Lee's office, Tennessee's General Assembly is making big strides to bring Summer EBT back to Tennessee.

Representative Michael Hale and Senator Paul Bailey have filed [HB1835](#) and [SB1911](#) that would require Tennessee to opt into Summer EBT every year the program is available.

Signe Anderson, TJC's Senior Director of Nutrition Advocacy, says: "The introduction of **HB1835** and **SB1911** is a critical step toward bringing **Summer EBT** back to Tennessee. Families, mayors, and faith leaders have made it clear: this program is essential for combatting childhood hunger. We applaud **Representative Hale** and **Senator Bailey** for answering the call of their constituents and championing a path forward that ensures all Tennessee families have the support they need this summer and beyond."

Summer EBT provides \$120 to children during the summer who are enrolled in free or reduced-price meals during the school year. Though a modest amount, the benefits go a long way in bridging the gap when school lunch is not available.

In 2024, Summer EBT provided food support to more than 700,000 Tennessee children, and those families spent those dollars in local grocery stores across our state. **In comparison, in 2025, Tennessee declined federal participation and instead operated a significantly smaller, state-only pilot that reached just over 18,000 children.** With grocery prices continuing to rise and federal food bank funding reduced, families, coalition partners, and now legislators, are calling for a return to the federal model, which reaches far more

children while requiring a comparable investment from the state. [Send a letter](#) to encourage legislators to support the bill.

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About Tennessee Justice Center / www.tnjustice.org For over 30 years, the Tennessee Justice Center has been standing with vulnerable Tennessee families and helping them access basic necessities of life. Since opening our doors in 1996, TJC has used lawsuits, legislation and coalition building to overcome injustice, winning \$8 billion in health care and hundreds of millions in financial and nutrition assistance for Tennesseans. Aside from lawsuits, TJC helps assist seniors and other individuals with TennCare, SNAP and other public benefit programs.