

Proposed Bill: Florida Grocery Access and Price Transparency Act

I. Summary of Research

Rising food prices have placed increasing financial pressure on households across Florida. The state ranks 28th nationally in grocery spending burden, with the average household spending approximately \$720 per month on groceries, accounting for 7.6% of total consumer spending (Naples News). Food inflation has been uneven across regions, with South Florida experiencing grocery price increases of over 4% in the past year. Essential items such as meat and eggs have seen price increases of approximately 14%, while only modest declines have occurred in other food categories (WLRN). Public concern reflects these trends, as grocery prices are now a significant source of stress for most Americans. National polling shows that 53% of Americans identify grocery prices as a major stressor, while an additional 33% view them as a minor stressor (CBS News). In Florida, where housing and insurance costs are already high, rising food prices further strain household budgets.

Food insecurity is no longer limited to low-income populations. Surveys indicate that 58% of middle-income families struggled to afford food in the past year, with one in five reporting skipped meals due to rising costs (No Kid Hungry). Low-income households face even greater challenges, often forced to prioritize affordability over nutrition, increasing long-term health risks (Bread for the World).

II. Analysis of Research

The research demonstrates that rising food prices in Florida represent not only an economic challenge but also an issue of access and equity. Because essential food items such as meat, eggs, and dairy cannot be easily eliminated from household consumption, price increases disproportionately burden families with limited financial flexibility. Middle-income households are particularly vulnerable, as they often do not qualify for federal food assistance programs despite experiencing food insecurity. Florida's reliance on federal food assistance programs exposes households to additional risk, especially as state officials warn of potential reductions in federal funding. While these programs help mitigate hunger, they do not address the underlying drivers of food price increases or provide consumer protections against market practices that contribute to price volatility.

The absence of state-level price transparency and oversight allows large grocery corporations to raise prices with minimal accountability. As a result, consumers lack the information and protections necessary to make informed decisions or challenge excessive price increases. Without targeted state action, food insecurity will likely continue to expand, exacerbating existing cost-of-living pressures and health disparities across Florida.

III. Description of the Bill's Contents (Solution)

The Florida Grocery Access and Price Transparency Act proposes a state-level response to rising food prices by focusing on accessibility, oversight, and consumer protection. The bill includes three primary components:

First, the bill establishes grocery price transparency requirements for large grocery retailers operating in Florida. Retailers would be required to report quarterly pricing data on essential food items, including meat, eggs, dairy, fruits, vegetables, and grains. This data would be made publicly accessible through a state-managed platform, increasing consumer awareness and discouraging excessive or unjustified price increases.

Second, the bill creates a Middle-Income Food Access Program to support households that earn above federal assistance thresholds but still struggle to afford essential groceries. This program would provide targeted grocery credits or rebates usable only on essential food items, helping close the assistance gap faced by middle-income families.

Third, the bill authorizes the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to oversee implementation, monitor pricing trends, and investigate potential anti-competitive behavior in grocery markets. This oversight mechanism strengthens accountability without imposing direct price controls.

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IV. Bipartisan Appeal

This bill has strong bipartisan potential because it addresses food affordability without relying on price controls or broad market intervention. For Republican lawmakers, the bill emphasizes market transparency, consumer choice, and accountability rather than government price-setting. Increased price transparency supports free-market competition by empowering

consumers with information and discouraging anti-competitive practices.

For Democratic lawmakers, the bill prioritizes food access, equity, and assistance for households disproportionately affected by food inflation. The Middle-Income Food Access Program expands support to families who fall outside traditional assistance programs while complementing existing federal aid.

Additionally, the bill focuses on essential food access and public accountability, issues that resonate across party lines. By strengthening oversight while maintaining market flexibility, the legislation balances economic responsibility with social protection, making it politically viable in a divided legislative environment.

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