

# NGA Opposes SNAP Purchasing Surveillance

The National Grocers Association (NGA) represents 21,000 independent community grocers and wholesalers across the United States. Independent community grocers account for 33 percent of all grocery sales, exceeding \$250 billion, and more than 1 million American jobs.

## What is SNAP Purchasing Surveillance?

There are troubling proposals in Congress that would force retailers to collect basket-level SNAP data from their customers and hand it over to the government. Basket-level data shows what an individual purchases in each shopping trip, and for SNAP, this would include items purchased with an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card, either in-person or online.

**SNAP purchasing surveillance will harm independent community grocers and the communities they serve.**

## Why is SNAP Purchasing Surveillance Harmful?

### An Unparalleled Invasion of Consumer Privacy

- Legislation like this would require retailers, as an extension of the federal government, to spy on Americans' buying habits and keep records of what customers purchase with their own money. Currently, no consumer purchases are subjected to this sort of snooping by the United States government. This unprecedented overreach will set a terrifying precedent of massive intrusion into the most private areas of our lives.
- Spying on consumer purchases will not make customers healthier or make the program more efficient because SNAP is a supplemental benefit and does not cover a family's entire grocery bill.
- Retailers would be forced to collect and safeguard federally protected information that could be hacked or leaked to the public.

### Data Will Be Misleading and Won't Help Public Health

- Basket-level SNAP data will only show part of a family's diet and will vary depending on how participants enter the grocery store. This will lead to an inaccurate accounting of what SNAP participants purchase, therefore the data will not be useful in researching how to improve the diets and health of SNAP participants.

At the HEART of the community.



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## Creates An Unfunded Mandate for Retailers

- Collection of SNAP purchasing data creates an expensive and labor-intensive burden for retailers, forcing them to create new data-sharing and categorization technologies. Increased retailer costs are inevitably passed on to all consumers, leading to unnecessary price inflation that will be felt by all Americans.
- USDA is already spending taxpayer dollars to study what SNAP recipients buy, and how their purchases compare to other Americans. Legislation would be duplicative of current USDA efforts.

## Big Chains Can Use SNAP Data to Crush Smaller Competitors

- In 2019, the Supreme Court ruled that SNAP redemption data is confidential commercial information that would put businesses at competitive disadvantages. Basket-level data is more granular and would put our members at an even greater risk than sharing redemption data.
- Sharing SNAP data will give larger retailers confidential business information that they will use to put smaller retailers out of business. Many independent grocers are the last oasis in communities in danger of becoming food deserts.

**Americans will pay a high price if community grocers are forced to snoop on their customers.**

**We urge you to oppose the SNAP Nutrition Security Act (S. 2326/H.R. 4909) and other similar legislation to protect your local grocers and the communities they serve.**

**At the HEART of the community.**

National Grocers Association  
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