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For Immediate Release

Contact: Annika Yates
(P) 312-870-4960
ayates@heartlandalliance.org

**SB 1847 Passes Illinois Senate:
Bill Improves Access to Food Assistance for Working Families**

On Wednesday afternoon, with a vote count of 34 yes votes and 17 no votes, the Illinois Senate passed SB 1847, a bill that provides access to SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly food stamps) for hungry working families. The SNAP program alleviates hunger and malnutrition by increasing food purchasing power for all eligible households. Currently, Illinois' gross income limit for SNAP eligibility is 130% of the federal poverty level, the lowest amount permitted by federal law. That level leaves out many parents working low-wage jobs who struggle to put adequate, healthy food on the table for their children.

SB 1847, sponsored by Senator Daniel Biss, will help working families access federal SNAP benefits by raising the gross income limit from 130% to 165% of the federal poverty line, or from \$25,737 to \$32,653 for a family of 3. "Expanding access to SNAP benefits is a no-brainer," said Senator Biss. "We have the opportunity to give this lifeline to more hard working families in Illinois, and because it's completely federally funded, it is fiscally responsible even in our current difficult budgetary situation."

"Families working low-wage jobs often have to make the choice between paying bills to avoid homelessness and eating," said Director Heidi Bush of Lincoln Square Friendship Center, a Chicago-based food pantry. "We serve many working families at our food pantries and this bill will make a huge difference in their lives and in our effort to address hunger in our community." It is estimated that this bill will make 40,000 additional households eligible for SNAP, and these households would receive a monthly benefit of \$125 on average.

SB 1847 will help bring approximately \$60 million in federally funded SNAP benefits to Illinois. This increase in working families' food budget will greatly benefit Illinois food retailers and generate economic growth statewide by increasing individuals' purchasing capacity. According to the USDA, every \$1.00 increase in SNAP benefits generates \$1.80 in local economic activity.

SB 1847 is supported by Heartland Alliance, the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law and numerous other organizations across the state.

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