

---

# SNAP Reform and Upward Mobility Act

---

Since the 90s, the federal government has loosened eligibility requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and expanded loopholes<sup>1</sup> that exempt large populations from its work requirements. As a result of these dynamics, the program has ballooned from 17.1 million food stamp recipients in 2000 to 41.1 million in 2022.<sup>2</sup> Over the same period, the cost of providing food stamps through SNAP has risen from \$17 billion to \$119 billion.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, SNAP continues to experience fraud and abuse that undermines the program's integrity and takes resources from the neediest.<sup>4</sup>

SNAP is meant to provide food for the most vulnerable and act as a temporary relief for individuals who've fallen on hard times. Work requirements, which most Americans support,<sup>5</sup> are commonsense measures to preserve welfare programs for future beneficiaries. Strengthening these requirements in SNAP would encourage beneficiaries to pursue work, which is associated with better mental health<sup>6</sup> and ending cycles of poverty.<sup>7</sup> Towards these ends, Sen. Lee is introducing the SNAP Reform and Upward Mobility Act (SRUMA).

## Bill Specifics:

### Title I – Poverty Measurement Improvement

- Sets up a temporary bipartisan commission within the Census Bureau to accurately measure income and poverty levels by accounting for all means-tested federal benefits. This title authorizes \$1 million for the commission to conduct this work. *Nothing in this title would affect eligibility for any program listed.*

### Title II – Modifications to SNAP

- Expands SNAP's general work requirements to individuals ages 16-64. The requirements currently only apply to individuals ages 16-59.
- Expands SNAP's hour-based work requirements to individuals ages 18-64 and to individuals with children over the age of six. The requirements currently only apply to individuals ages 18-49 and only to childless adults.

---

<sup>1</sup> Marie Fishpaw and Robert Rector, "Saving Food Stamps for the Poor, Not the Prosperous," [Heritage Foundation Commentary](#), August 2, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> "SNAP Data Tables," [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#), March 10, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> "Scammers Rip Off SNAP Benefits, Keeping Americans Hungry," [Bloomberg](#), January 25, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Linley Sanders, "How Americans evaluate Social Security, Medicare, and six other entitlement programs," [YouGov America](#), February 8, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> "Inactive, Disconnected, and Ailing: A Portrait of Prime-Age Men Out of the Labor Force," [Joint Economic Committee](#), September 18, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Ron Haskins, "Helping Work Reduce Poverty," [National Affairs](#), Winter 2017.

---

- Tightens state eligibility for federal waivers of SNAP work requirements by closing the geographic waiver loophole.
- Reduces the percentage of the SNAP caseload that states can exempt from work requirements from 15% to 5%.
- Allows married individuals with children to fulfill the program’s hour-based work requirements jointly.
- Requires the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to report to Congress on the outcomes of SNAP Employment and Training Programs.
- Requires a 5% state match in SNAP benefits. The match increases by 5% each year from FY2022-FY2032, ending at 50%. This will bring SNAP in line with other welfare programs and incentivize states to conduct greater oversight on their own.
- Closes a “broad-based categorical eligibility” loophole in SNAP by ensuring that benefits received through other safety-net programs are means-tested, ongoing, and substantial for those benefits to make an individual categorically eligible for SNAP.
- Requires SNAP recipients to cooperate with fraud investigations as a condition of program eligibility.
- Allows for individuals to formally authorize five “users” for their Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card and institutes penalties for unauthorized uses.
- Requires food retailers at high or medium risk for fraudulent SNAP transactions to be reauthorized on an annual basis.
- Requires the USDA to reinstate the publication of annual SNAP State Activity Reports.
- Requires states to make a disqualification determination of a food stamp retailer.
- Allows states to retain 50% of funds collected from intentional program violations to be used for fraud prevention efforts. Currently, states are only able to retain 35% of these funds and are not required to use the retained funds for better oversight of SNAP.