



Representative Scott Wiggam
1st House District

Chairman Merrin, Vice-Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for providing me with the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 200—SNAP Reform Act.

This legislation aims to restore dignity to Ohioans by moving them from public assistance to work. By requiring able-bodied adults to fulfill work requirements in order to receive SNAP benefits, more individuals will find themselves on a pathway to long-term employment, ultimately eliminating their need for food assistance.

I want to be clear that the target audience for this reform is only those considered to be able-bodied adults. This is not about children. This is not about seniors. This is not about individuals with disabilities. This is not about anyone who is not physically and mentally fit for work. In fact, this bill aims to preserve resources for those who truly require them.

This bill is about able-bodied adults. I believe that those who can work, should work. Individuals who are capable to support themselves should not be able to rely on other hard-working tax-payers.

The data is very clear—work requirements can and do move able-bodied adults off of public assistance and into the workforce.

Take, for example, Kansas and Maine, who have implemented work requirements into their own food stamp programs and seen substantial results including:

- A doubling of the incomes of enrollees who got back to work.
- Enrollees not just going back to low-wage jobs, but finding desirable employment in over 600 industries including: construction, manufacturing, and nursing.
- And enrollee time spent on welfare being cut in half.

Across the nation, millions of Americans are trapped in a state of government dependency. Every dollar that is spent on able-bodied adults diverts precious resources from the very individuals that the program was designed to help—those in true need.

In the past decade and half, the number of able-bodied adults receiving food stamps has skyrocketed—a staggering 229% increase since 2000.

During that same time frame, we have seen a 480% increase in the amount spent on these able bodies adults--\$34 billion spent on food stamps as of FY 2015.

Two out of every five able-bodied adults on food stamps have been there at least eight years. It's time to restore dignity through work for our population. We must ensure that participation in the food stamp program includes a universal work requirement for all able-bodied adults. This bill will require able-bodied adults receiving SNAP to work, train, or volunteer 20 hours per week in order to receive benefits.



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Furthermore, this bill is aimed at holding parents who commit fraudulent acts more accountable. Those convicted of Welfare fraud will be removed from being the holder of their SNAP benefits, to provide an extra layer of security to ensure that they don't continue to abuse and scam the system. This is achieved by allowing a protective payee to control the benefits to ensure that children still receive them, and taking it out of the hands of a fraudulent adult.

The bill will also require adults to be current on child support payments in order for food stamp benefits to be received. It also requires cooperation with the department regarding the establishment of paternity and establishing, modifying, and enforcing a child support order. This is to encourage all adults involved with a child support agreement to cooperate with the department fully in order to receive food stamp benefits. Please note the benefits tied to this provision are ONLY food stamps for adults. This provision would not withhold food stamps for children.

In Summary, this bill will change Ohio's law in the following ways:

- The bill would end the waivers that allow able bodied adults who receive government SNAP benefits to refuse work requirements (or community volunteer requirements). This would make sure that all able bodied adults are putting in the required 20 hours per week of work or training necessary to qualify.
- This would also bring back asset tests, so that people who are rich in assets but with little-to-no income can't reap benefits that would be a greater benefit to truly needy families. Currently, you can win the million dollar lottery and still collect public SNAP benefits.
- This also puts in place a system where parents who have committed fraud, by scamming or cheating the system, will no longer be able to control their children's SNAP benefits. The benefits will be controlled by a protective payee. This helps keep fraud from perpetuating, while ensuring that children still receive the benefit.
- Finally, this bill would stop parents who aren't cooperating on child support payments from controlling their children's SNAP benefits, turning it over to a protective payee to control for them.

Let me be clear, the intent of this bill is not only to restore dignity to Ohioans by moving them from public assistance to work, but also to preserve resources for those who truly need it. Some people will never be able to provide for themselves, but we should do all we can to extend some basic dignity to those who can, because at the end of the day, no welfare program can replace work.

I respectfully ask for your support on this matter. Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 200. I would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.