

Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee



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Opposition for S.B. No. 17, Regards eligibility for SNAP, Medicaid, and unemployment

The Foodbank, Inc. relieves hunger in the community by acquiring and distributing food in Montgomery, Greene, and Preble counties of Ohio. We submit this testimony in opposition of S.B. 17, which would impose unnecessary regulations that will be harmful to families already struggling to make ends meet.

In keeping with our hunger relief mission, The Foodbank, Inc. performs outreach and application assistance for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This work has already been substantially impacted by the pandemic, which has forced our staff to conduct these activities remotely. While we are honored to participate in this life-stabilizing work, we experience frustration alongside our clients as they navigate a system that sometimes feels designed to keep them out.

S.B. 17 will make it more difficult for our clients, a staggering number of whom are seeking food assistance for the first time, to apply for and maintain their benefits amid an ongoing financial crisis. Provisions such as the transition to change reporting, photo I.D. requirements, and removal of broad-based categorical eligibility are hostile to the people we serve. Far from protecting those the state labels “truly needy,” these policies will increase participation barriers for people who are already vulnerable, including seniors, low-wage workers with variable income, and people of color.

We must call into question the validity of these changes to SNAP, a program which sees fraud rates of roughly 1 percent, at a time when an estimated 18% of Ohioans are reported food insecure during the pandemic. S.B. 17 will make it more difficult for us to do our job by weakening programs the people we serve use to feed their families, pay their bills, and afford medical care. For that reason, we are compelled to submit the above statement in opposition to this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.