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Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
Senate Bill 17
February 24, 2021

Dear Senators Roegner, McColley, Hoagland, Lang, Schaffer, Craig and Thomas:

My name is Larry Rodriguez, I am a member of Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality (NOBLE).

NOBLE is a coalition of individuals and organizations advocating for ourselves and others who are consumers of State Health and Human Services programs. Our coalition consists of many folks that are low-income citizens and most impacted by cuts or negative changes at the State, local and Federal levels to such programs as Medicaid and SNAP, just to name a few.

Today I come before you in response to the proposed SB 17.

At the onset of the pandemic, I lost my job at Susie Soups in Cleveland Ohio. Given that I am legally blind and have several disabilities finding gainful employment during a global pandemic has been challenging to say the least. As I currently have no income, the SNAP benefits that I receive have been lifesaving. While I am mostly independent, I often rely on others in my household when it comes to complicated tasks such as grocery shopping. SB 17 if enacted would require for my picture to be placed on my EBT card. I find the proposed requirement to be problematic, especially for people like me that rely on others for grocery shopping. It is troubling to me that additional barriers to people's ability to access food are being proposed in the middle of a pandemic.

We as taxpayers strongly urge you to vote No on SB 17. Instead, we ask that you work to protect all who have suffered from the pandemic and the ensuing economic downfall – strengthen their access to SNAP, Medicaid and unemployment benefits. Do not pass legislation that will result in policies that will pull down rather than lift up Ohioans. Thank you!

Thank you for hearing me,
Larry Rodriguez, NOBLE