

May 6, 2021

Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee

SB 17

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Committee. My name is Gail Long and I am a member of Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality/NOBLE. NOBLE feels strongly that SB 17 is not a positive piece of legislation but rather a punitive one. It assumes that recipients of benefits such as SNAP are trying to cheat the system. It also requires that people who are entitled to benefits such as Medicaid be removed from eligibility if they do not work.

The Pandemic is not over. Thousands of Ohioans are applying for and receiving SNAP, Medicaid and Unemployment Benefits. SB 17 would make the application process much more cumbersome and the use of these benefits, if approved, difficult at best.

The required photo ID for a SNAP recipients is unreasonable. If the responsible adult had his or her photo on the SNAP ID but could not go to the store because of illness, a store owner could refuse to serve the individual doing the shopping for the recipient. This makes no sense.

Demanding regular reporting of change in incomes is cumbersome. The majority of individuals receiving SNAP benefits are hourly employees and their salaries are based on various circumstances including the number of shifts they are able to work, sick leave policies and of course the impact of COVID restrictions. Think of all the increased administrative work this will take along with showing proof of changes required of the recipient if this were to be implemented.

If the purpose of SB 17 is to create a more efficient system than I would suggest defeating it in the short term and spending the next year establishing a task force to reach consensus on the issues addressed in this Bill. If the purpose of SB 17 is to make it more difficult for citizens of the State of Ohio to access entitled benefits, than by passing it you will succeed. This should not be the purpose of the bill and it should be defeated if it is.