

# PUBLIC POLICY BRIEFS

SISTERS *of* CHARITY HEALTH SYSTEM



## Improving Access to Nutrition Act of 2021

### Issue Overview

Food insecurity is one of the most pressing issues in the United States today. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation went from bad to worse. Feeding America estimates that around 42 million Americans are currently food insecure. That number includes 13 million children facing food insecurity. The issue with these steep numbers is that many of these people do not qualify for federal nutrition programs; rather, they have to rely on their local communities to provide support.

Food insecurity is one of the largest social issues in America. With more availability provided to people regarding federal nutrition programs, there will likely be a reduction in the population of those who are food insecure. One of these recognized programs is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The House of Representatives has set a bill in motion regarding the amendment of qualifications for this program. The details of that bill are outlined below.

### House of Representatives Bill H.R. 1753

### Improving Access to Nutrition Act of 2021

This bill would amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to repeal the work requirement that disqualifies able-bodied adults for eligibility to participate in SNAP. Overall, this bill would grant more people access to federal nutrition programs while simultaneously expanding these services.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SNAP has a proven record of effectiveness in promoting food security and health, as well as providing economic stimulus</li><li>• Improving access to SNAP would be an advantage to every community because more than 85% of benefits go to households with children, seniors, and persons with disabilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work requirements for SNAP help to reduce dependence in able-bodied adults</li><li>• Without requirements, the cycle of dependency will continue to negatively affect the economy</li></ul>

## **Current Status**

This bill was introduced in the House of Representatives on March 10, 2021. It is currently waiting for approval from the House to further the legislation.

### *What does this mean for us at The Sisters of Charity Health System?*

Our basis in Catholic Social Teaching allows us to take responsibility for the needs of the poor and vulnerable. We operate directly on behalf of the common good, because a just society is one where all needs of a community are treated with the same importance. This bill would provide more marginalized members of our community the access to food that they need, which aligns with our mission in helping those who are the most underserved.

### *What does this mean for you, your family, or your community?*

In 2017, there were over 300,000 food insecure people around the Cleveland area that utilized the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. This is a large portion of the population. The Cleveland community could greatly benefit from this legislation being passed. With more people allowed to participate in federal nutrition programs, the community of Cleveland could improve overall because the health of individuals would improve.



**SISTERS of CHARITY**  
HEALTH SYSTEM

*A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine*