

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5915

To amend the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to repeal a certain disqualification to receive benefits under title IV of the Social Security Act and benefits under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008; and to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to provide that incarcerated individuals who are scheduled to be released from an institution within 30 days shall be considered to be a household for purposes of such Act.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 14, 2020

Mr. COHEN (for himself, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RUSH, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. ADAMS, and Ms. BARRAGÁN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to repeal a certain disqualification to receive benefits under title IV of the Social Security Act and benefits under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008; and to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to provide that incarcerated individuals who are scheduled to be released from an institution within 30 days shall be considered to be a household for purposes of such Act.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
 2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Making Essentials
 5 Available and Lawful (MEAL) Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. TANF ASSISTANCE AND SNAP BENEFITS.**

7 (a) REPEAL OF BAN ON ASSISTANCE.—Section 115
 8 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Rec-
 9 onciliation Act of 1996 (21 U.S.C. 862a) is repealed.

10 (b) EFFECT ON STATE ELECTIONS TO OPT OUT OR
 11 LIMIT PERIOD OF PROHIBITION.—

12 (1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

13 (A) the term “State” has the meaning
 14 given the term in section 115(e) of the Personal
 15 Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconcili-
 16 ation Act of 1996 (21 U.S.C. 862a(e)) (as in
 17 effect on the day before the date of enactment
 18 of this Act); and

19 (B) the term “TANF assistance or SNAP
 20 benefits” means assistance or benefits referred
 21 to in section 115(a) of the Personal Responsi-
 22 bility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act
 23 of 1996 (as in effect on the day before the date
 24 of enactment of this Act).

1 (2) EFFECT.—A law enacted by a State under
2 the authority under subparagraph (A) or (B) of sub-
3 section (d)(1) of section 115 of the Personal Respon-
4 sibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of
5 1996 (21 U.S.C. 862a) (as in effect on the day be-
6 fore the date of enactment of this Act), and any
7 State law or regulation enacted to carry out the re-
8 quirements of such section (as then in effect), that
9 imposes conditions on eligibility for TANF assist-
10 ance or SNAP benefits shall have no force or effect.

11 **SEC. 3. MODIFICATION OF DEFINITION OF HOUSEHOLD**
12 **FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING SNAP**
13 **BENEFITS.**

14 Section 3(m)(5) of the Food and Nutrition Act of
15 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012(m)(5)) is amended by adding at the
16 end the following:

17 “(H) Incarcerated individuals are who
18 scheduled to be released from an institution
19 within 30 days.”.

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