

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2837

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

APRIL 26, 2021

Mr. COHEN (for himself, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. COOPER, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HORSFORD, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RUSH, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. TRONE, Ms. SCANLON, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. WELCH, and Ms. DEAN) 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 2021”.

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 9 onciliation Act of 1996 (21 U.S.C. 862a) is repealed.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 ON STATE POLICIES.—Any law en-
 2 acted by a State under the authority under subpara-
 3 graph (A) or (B) of subsection (d)(1) of section 115
 4 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Oppor-
 5 tunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (21 U.S.C. 862a),
 6 and any State law, policy, or regulation that imposes
 7 conditions on eligibility for the supplemental nutri-
 8 tion assistance program and temporary assistance
 9 for needy families program based on an individual’s
 10 conviction of an offense related to a controlled sub-
 11 stance, shall have no force or effect.

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

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

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

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