

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1276

To amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to require that supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits be calculated with reference to the cost of the low-cost food plan as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 1, 2017

Ms. ADAMS (for herself, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. EVANS, Ms. PLASKETT, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. NORTON, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. LEE, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. MOORE, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. RUSH, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. COHEN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. JAYAPAL, and Mr. LANGEVIN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to require that supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits be calculated with reference to the cost of the low-cost food plan as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, and for other purposes.

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

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Closing the Meal Gap
3 Act of 2017”.

4 **SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS.**

5 (a) **CALCULATION OF PROGRAM BENEFITS.**—The
6 Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.)
7 is amended—

8 (1) in section 3 (7 U.S.C. 2012)—

9 (A) by striking subsection (u),

10 (B) by redesignating subsections (n)
11 through (t) as subsections (o) through (u), re-
12 spectively, and

13 (C) by inserting after subsection (m) the
14 following:

15 “(n) ‘Low-cost food plan’ means the diet required to
16 feed a family of four persons, consisting of a man and
17 a woman nineteen through fifty, a child six through eight,
18 and a child nine through eleven years of age, determined
19 in accordance with the Secretary’s calculations. The cost
20 of such diet shall be the basis for uniform allotments for
21 all households regardless of their actual composition, ex-
22 cept that the Secretary shall—

23 “(1) make household-size adjustments (based
24 on the unrounded cost of such diet) taking into ac-
25 count economies of scale;

1 “(2) make cost adjustments in the low-cost food
2 plan for Hawaii and the urban and rural parts of
3 Alaska to reflect the cost of food in Hawaii and
4 urban and rural Alaska;

5 “(3) make cost adjustments in the separate
6 low-cost food plans for Guam, and the Virgin Is-
7 lands of the United States, to reflect the cost of food
8 in those States, but not to exceed the cost of food
9 in the 50 States and the District of Columbia; and

10 “(4) on October 1, 2017, and each October 1
11 thereafter, adjust the cost of the diet to reflect the
12 cost of the diet in the preceding June, and round the
13 result to the nearest lower dollar increment for each
14 household size.”,

15 (2) in section 8(a) (7 U.S.C. 2017(a))—

16 (A) by striking “thrifty food plan” each
17 place it appears, and inserting “low-cost food
18 plan”, and

19 (B) by striking “8 percent” and inserting
20 “10 percent”,

21 (3) in section 16(c)(1)(A)(ii) (7 U.S.C.
22 2025(c)(1)(A)(ii))—

23 (A) in subclause (I) by striking “for fiscal
24 year 2014, at an amount not greater than \$37”

1 and inserting “for fiscal year 2017, at an
2 amount not greater than \$50”, and

3 (B) in subclause (II)—

4 (i) by striking “June 30, 2013” and
5 inserting “June 30, 2017”, and

6 (ii) by striking “thrifty food plan”
7 and inserting “low-cost food plan”, and

8 (4) in section 19(a)(2)(A) (7 U.S.C.
9 2028(a)(2)(A))—

10 (A) in clause (i) by striking “and” at the
11 end,

12 (B) in clause (ii)—

13 (i) by striking “each fiscal year there-
14 after” and inserting “each of the fiscal
15 years 2004 through 2017”, and

16 (ii) by striking the period at the end
17 and inserting a semicolon, and

18 (C) by adding at the end the following:

19 “(iii) for fiscal year 2018,
20 \$2,650,000,000; and

21 “(iv) subject to the availability of ap-
22 propriations under section 18(a), for fiscal
23 year 2018 and each fiscal year thereafter,
24 the amount determined under clause (iii),
25 as adjusted by the percentage by which the

1 low-cost food plan has been adjusted under
2 section 3(n)(4) between June 30, 2018,
3 and June 30 of the immediately preceding
4 fiscal year.”.

5 (b) STANDARD MEDICAL EXPENSE DEDUCTION.—
6 Section 5(e)(5) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
7 (7 U.S.C. 2014(e)(5)) is amended—

8 (1) in subparagraph (A) by striking “an excess
9 medical” and all that follows through the period at
10 the end, and inserting “a standard medical deduc-
11 tion or to a medical expense deduction of actual
12 costs for the allowable medical expenses incurred by
13 the elderly or disabled member, exclusive of special
14 diets.”, and

15 (2) by adding at the end the following:

16 “(D) The standard medical expense deduc-
17 tion shall be equal to \$140 for fiscal year 2018,
18 and for each subsequent fiscal year shall be
19 equal to the applicable amount for the pre-
20 ceeding fiscal year as adjusted to reflect changes
21 for the 12-month period ending the preceding
22 June 30 in the Consumer Price Index for All
23 Urban Consumers: Medical Care published by
24 the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Depart-
25 ment of Labor, except that for any such fiscal

1 year the State agency may establish a greater
2 standard medical expense deduction that satis-
3 fies cost neutrality standards established by the
4 Secretary for such fiscal year.”.

5 (c) ELIMINATION OF CAP OF EXCESS SHELTER EX-
6 PENSES.—Section 5(e)(6) of the Food and Nutrition Act
7 of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(e)(6)) is amended—

8 (1) by striking subparagraph (B), and
9 (2) by redesignating subparagraphs (C) and
10 (D) as subparagraphs (B) and (C), respectively.

11 (d) WORK REQUIREMENT.—Section 6(o)(3) of the
12 Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o)(3))
13 is amended—

14 (1) in subparagraph (D) by striking “or” at the
15 end,

16 (2) in subparagraph (E) by striking the period
17 at the end and inserting “; or”, and

18 (3) by adding at end the following:

19 “(F) not offered a position in a program
20 described in subparagraph (B) or (C) of para-
21 graph (2).”.

22 (e) FUNDING OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PRO-
23 GRAMS.—Section 16(h)(1)(E)(ii)(II) of the Food and Nu-
24 trition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2025(h)(1)(E)(ii)(II)) is

1 amended by inserting “subparagraphs (A) through (E) of”
2 after “under”.

3 (f) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

4 (1) FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008.—The
5 Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et
6 seq.) is amended—

7 (A) in section 10 (7 U.S.C. 2019) by strik-
8 ing “3(p)” and inserting “3(q)”,

9 (B) in section 11 (7 U.S.C. 2012)—

10 (i) in subsection (a)(2) by striking
11 “3(t)(1)” and inserting “3(u)(1)”, and

12 (ii) in subsection (d)—

13 (I) by striking “3(t)(1)” each
14 place it appears and inserting
15 “3(u)(1)”, and

16 (II) by striking “3(t)(2)” each
17 place it appears and inserting
18 “3(u)(2)”,

19 (C) in section 19(a)(2)(A)(ii) (7 U.S.C.
20 (a)(2)(A)(ii)) by striking “3(u)(4)” and insert-
21 ing “3(n)(4)”, and

22 (D) in section 27(a)(2) (7 U.S.C.
23 2036(a)(2))—

24 (i) in subparagraph (C) by striking
25 “3(u)(4)” and inserting “3(n)(4)”, and

1 (ii) in subparagraph (E) by striking
2 “3(u)(4)” and inserting “3(n)(4)”.

3 (2) LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE
4 ACT OF 1981.—Section 2605(f)(2)(A) of the Low-In-
5 come Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 (42
6 U.S.C. 8624(f)(2)(A)) is amended—

7 (A) by striking “5(e)(6)(C)(iv)(I)” and in-
8 serting “5(e)(6)(B)(iv)(1)”, and

9 (B) by striking “(7 U.S.C.
10 2014(e)(6)(C)(iv)(I))” and inserting “(7 U.S.C.
11 2014(e)(6)(B)(iv)(I))”.

12 (g) TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.—The Food and Nu-
13 trition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) is amended—

14 (1) in section 5(a) (7 U.S.C. 2014(a)) by strik-
15 ing “3(n)(4)” each place it appears and inserting
16 “3(m)(4)”,

17 (2) in section 8(f)(1)(A)(i) (7 U.S.C.
18 2017(f)(1)(A)(i)) by striking “3(n)(5)” and inserting
19 “3(m)(5)”, and

20 (3) in section 17(b)(1)(B)(iv)(III)(aa) (7 U.S.C.
21 2016(b)(1)(B)(iv)(III)(aa)) by striking “3(n)” and
22 inserting “3(m)”.

1 **SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICATION OF AMENDMENTS.**

2 (a) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Except as provided in sub-
3 section (b), this Act and the amendments made by this
4 Act shall take effect on October 1, 2017.

5 (b) APPLICATION OF AMENDMENTS.—The amend-
6 ments made by subsections (b), (c), and (f)(2) shall not
7 apply with respect to certification periods that begin be-
8 fore October 1, 2017.

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