



U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

January 16, 2020

Dr. Phillip Swagel
Director
Congressional Budget Office
402 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Dr. Swagel:

As you are aware, federal investments in Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) help millions of Americans meet their basic human needs. These programs help families living paycheck to paycheck put food on the table, afford prescription drugs, and pay their bills. Policymakers from all parts of the political spectrum have proposed changes to these programs that will impact these vulnerable families. One of the most concerning of these reforms is imposing work requirements for benefit eligibility. The Trump Administration is currently pursuing work requirements for several federal programs in the form of state waivers and new regulations that limit states' flexibility to respond to changing economic conditions. I am deeply concerned that these changes are being implemented with little knowledge of their effects on Americans' overall health and well-being.

In contrast, initiatives have been proposed to increase support for beneficiaries so that they are better able to pursue employment and work their way out of poverty. It is important to know more about how these work supports could help struggling families get ahead and build a more successful future.

Therefore, I am requesting that CBO analyze the effect on program participation, employment, and other outcomes of work requirements and work supports in Medicaid, SNAP, and TANF. CBO should examine a broad array of work-related policy proposals, including policies that directly support work, such as subsidizing childcare, transportation, and wages, as well as policies that limit or eliminate benefits for adults who are subject to work requirements in a program but who are not working or preparing for work. CBO should analyze the effect of those work requirements and work supports on low-income people, including the consequences for their program participation, employment, and the resources at their disposal. The resources examined should include benefits as well as earnings. In particular, CBO should analyze how work requirements and work supports affect the benefits available to families near the poverty threshold and those well below it. The report should illuminate other factors affecting the

employment of program participants and barriers to work, such as economic conditions, amount of education, disabilities, and the presence of young or ill family members.

The staff contact for this analysis is Emily King, who can be reached at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,



John A. Yarmuth
Chairman