



Statement for the Record

Chanel McCorkle

Candidate

America Works of Maryland, Inc.

June 25, 2015

United States House Committee on Ways and Means

Subcommittee on Human Resources

Subcommittee on Nutrition

How Our Welfare System Can Discourage Work

Chairman Charles W. Boustany
Subcommittee on Human Resources
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Jackie Walorski
Subcommittee on Nutrition
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

June 25, 2015

Chairman Boustany and Chairman Walorski:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Chanel McCorkle and I am grateful to share my story. I moved to Baltimore in April 2011 with my daughter and her father. We were new to Baltimore and had no place to go. I moved in with my two sisters and was told about the City Homes Program. I was told it was an organization that would help me find affordable housing for my family and me. The same day I applied, I was rejected; according to City Homes I had not worked in the state for at least 18 months and therefore was ineligible for assistance. Forced to remain with my sisters, my next step was to go to the Department of Social Services for additional support. Fortunately, I was granted food stamps and medical insurance assistance.

I found a job at Rite Aid Pharmacy as a cashier making \$9.00 per hour. When I let the Department of Social Services know of this job and my earnings they dramatically lowered my food stamps. The \$200 reduction made it difficult to make ends meet.

One year later I found a better opportunity as a grill chef at St. Joseph's Hospital. The full time position required me to find and maintain stable and reliable day care for my three year old daughter. I again went to the Department of Social Service for help. I applied for daycare vouchers and was turned down. I was informed that \$11.00 per hour was too high of an income to receive vouchers. I was forced to rely on friends, family, and neighbors to babysit while I worked. I found myself bouncing my daughter around from place to place and from person to person in order to keep my job. After a while the holes in my daycare situation became more and more apparent as friends and family were not able to commit full time due to their own work obligations. I struggled with my attendance every day and over the course of two years I was calling out weekly due because I had no sitter for my child and I could not afford to pay a childcare center.

In 2012 I became pregnant with my son; after he was born I needed additional help with childcare. I added him to my social services case and still was not eligible for daycare vouchers. I was eventually let go from St. Joseph's Hospital for missing too many days of work.

After I lost my job I applied for Temporary Cash Assistance through the Department of Social Services. Thirty days after I applied I was granted cash assistance, and immediately received daycare vouchers and an increase in food stamp assistance. The daycare vouchers I so desperately needed while I was working

were finally granted to me after it cost me my job. I was also placed with America Works of Maryland, Inc. (AWMD). AWMD taught me how to dress professionally, answer interview questions, format a resume, and seek current and worthwhile job opportunities. I feel like I had to lose my job in order for social services to really help me.

I have recently accepted a job working 40 hours per week with excellent benefits. I am really excited to return to work. I know that after the Department of Social Services gets notified I will lose some - if not all - of my benefits, and that is scary. I am sure they will take my daycare vouchers from me or make the co-payment too high. My food stamps will be decreased or nonexistent and my medical benefits may end. I have tried to make provisions if those things should happen. I have just started to get back on track; I know I am well on my way no matter how much of an uphill battle it may be. I am fighting to get back to work, to support my family and become independent once again.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity. I look forward to any questions.