

# ***ADVISORY***

## **FROM THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Chairman Reichert Announces Hearing on Waiving Work Requirements in the TANF Program**

Congressman Dave Reichert (R-WA), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means, today announced that the Subcommittee will hold a hearing on the proposed waiver of work requirements in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. **The hearing will take place at 9:00 am on Thursday, February 28, 2013, in Room 1100 of the Longworth House Office Building.**

In view of the limited time available to hear from witnesses, oral testimony at this hearing will be from invited witnesses only. Witnesses will include experts on welfare reform and individuals who will testify on the importance of work requirements in TANF and other social programs. However, any individual or organization not scheduled for an oral appearance may submit a written statement for consideration by the Committee and for inclusion in the printed record of the hearing.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Work requirements were a central feature of the landmark bipartisan 1996 welfare reform law. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, created as a part of welfare reform, was designed to end the dependence of needy families on government benefits by promoting work, marriage, and personal responsibility. As a result of these reforms, States shifted from primarily providing monthly checks to recipients to instead providing benefits and services to help low-income parents get jobs and become self-sufficient. After the 1996 reforms, the nation saw increased work and earnings for single mothers, a decrease in poverty among female-headed families with children, and record declines in welfare dependence.

Since 1996, States have been required to meet statutory work requirements or face rising financial penalties. For example, States currently are generally expected to engage at least 50 percent of adults collecting TANF assistance checks in work or specified work-related activities. Certain credits and exemptions apply toward this 50 percent requirement, such as the credit for recent caseload declines and exemptions for disabled adults. Additionally, individuals counted as engaged in work must participate for a minimum number of hours in work or related activities each week.

On July 12, 2012, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued an Information Memorandum in which they announced that the Secretary would begin allowing States to apply for a waiver of the TANF work requirements as part of a demonstration project related to the employment goals of the TANF program. No such waivers had previously been granted since the TANF program was created in 1996, nor had the Obama Administration indicated it was contemplating such a change. On September 20, 2012, the House of Representatives approved H.J. Res. 118, a resolution disapproving of the HHS waiver memorandum by a 250 to 164 vote.

The TANF program is currently authorized through March 27, 2013.

In announcing the hearing, Chairman Reichert stated, **“Americans consistently believe welfare should primarily serve as a bridge to self sufficiency, empowering able-bodied recipients with the tools to secure a job, lift oneself out of poverty, and provide for one’s family. To meet these goals, work requirements have been the cornerstone of empowering welfare recipients within the TANF program since 1996—successfully increasing earnings for single mothers, decreasing poverty, and setting record declines in government dependence. Now the Administration claims they can ignore the law and waive these work requirements. Congress was clear that it did not intend for HHS to have the authority to waive these work requirements, and no prior Secretary has claimed to have it. It is critical for us to review the damaging effects of waiving TANF work requirements, which could result in less work and earnings, and more poverty and government dependence.”**

#### **FOCUS OF THE HEARING:**

The hearing will review HHS’ proposed waivers of TANF work requirements.

#### **DETAILS FOR SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS:**

Please Note: Any person(s) and/or organization(s) wishing to submit for the hearing record must follow the appropriate link on the hearing page of the Committee website and complete the informational forms. From the Committee homepage, <http://waysandmeans.house.gov>, select “Hearings.” Select the hearing for which you would like to submit, and click on the link entitled, “Click here to provide a submission for the record.” Once you have followed the online instructions, submit all requested information. Attach your submission as a Word document, in compliance with the formatting requirements listed below, **by Thursday, March 14, 2013**. Finally, please note that due to the change in House mail policy, the U.S. Capitol Police will refuse sealed-package deliveries to all House Office Buildings. For questions, or if you encounter technical problems, please call (202) 225-1721 or (202) 225-3625.

#### **FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS:**

The Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record. As always, submissions will be included in the record according to the discretion of the Committee. The Committee will not alter the content of your submission, but we reserve the right to format it according to our guidelines. Any submission provided to the Committee by a witness, any supplementary materials submitted for the printed record, and any written comments in response to a request for written

comments must conform to the guidelines listed below. Any submission or supplementary item not in compliance with these guidelines will not be printed, but will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

1. All submissions and supplementary materials must be provided in Word format and **MUST NOT** exceed a total of 10 pages, including attachments. Witnesses and submitters are advised that the Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record.
2. Copies of whole documents submitted as exhibit material will not be accepted for printing. Instead, exhibit material should be referenced and quoted or paraphrased. All exhibit material not meeting these specifications will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.
3. All submissions must include a list of all clients, persons, and/or organizations on whose behalf the witness appears. A supplemental sheet must accompany each submission listing the name, company, address, telephone, and fax numbers of each witness.

The Committee seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202-225-1721 or 202-226-3411 TTD/TTY in advance of the event (four business days notice is requested). Questions with regard to special accommodation needs in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats) may be directed to the Committee as noted above.

Note: All Committee advisories and news releases are available online at <http://www.waysandmeans.house.gov/>.