U.S. Rep. Grothman: Introduces bill to eliminate work requirement waivers for food stamps

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(Washington, D.C.) – Congressman Glenn Grothman (R-Glenbeulah) today introduced a bill amending the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.

Typically, non-disabled working age adults without dependents who participate in the food stamps program have to fulfill certain work requirements to receive benefits. During the recession, the Obama administration created waivers for these work requirements.

Grothman's bill would eliminate the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture to grant these waivers from work requirements for non-disabled working age adults without dependents.

"This bill is an important step in reforming welfare programs to help free capable individuals from government dependence and empower them to achieve the American Dream," **said Grothman.** "I believe we should provide assistance to those who have fallen on hard times, but these work requirement waivers are part of an unfortunate trend of government laws and regulations that create disincentives for individuals to work.

"The current Food and Nutrition Act has been rightfully maligned. Recipients are criticized for not working, it discourages marriage and food stamps are sold, while there is evidence of fraud by businesses that accept food stamps. Making work

requirements mandatory will address all these problems."

For example, when Maine implemented work requirements for those non-disabled working age adults without dependents receiving food stamps, the number of recipients dropped by nearly 80 percent during the first three months of the policy being in effect.

Background

Forty-nine percent of the U.S. population receives benefits from one or more government programs. Forty-three million Americans received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in 2016 – up 26 million since 2001 – costing the federal government more than $5 billion per month just last year.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture currently grants three months of SNAP benefits every three years to Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) who are 18-49 and not disabled. To receive SNAP benefits beyond the three-month time limit, ABAWDs must work at least 80 hours per month, participate in educations and training at least 80 hours per month or comply with a state-approved workfare program.

The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 allows states to request a waiver of the three-month time limit if the states can demonstrate that they have an unemployment rate greater than 10 percent or lack sufficient jobs. In the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2016, 11 states and territories were approved for these waivers statewide. Twenty-six states were approved for partial time limit waivers.