

U.S. Rep. Moore and U.S. Rep. Schakowsky: Introduce the COLAs Don't Count Act

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Today, Congresswoman Gwen Moore (WI-04) and Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (IL-09) introduced the COLAs Don't Count Act, which would exempt annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) under the Social Security Act and veteran's benefits from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility and benefit determinations. State supplementation program payments would similarly be exempt.

This year, the Social Security COLA was 8.7 percent. According to USDA, that COLA increase decreased benefits for an estimated 36 percent of SNAP participants, at an average of \$32 a month. An estimated 28,000 SNAP households completely lost their eligibility. SNAP is an effective hunger and poverty alleviating tool, reaching millions of Americans each year. Nearly 9 million Social Security and SSI beneficiaries receive SNAP benefits.

"Social Security's COLA is a vital enhancement to account for inflation because it helps support sustained and sufficient retirement and disability benefits. This is especially important for so many beneficiaries who rely on Social Security as their only source of income.

But COLA increases should not cost one's food assistance, especially since these same individuals are more likely to be feeling the pain of higher food prices. By better aligning these programs with the needs of the Americans they serve, we better ensure that both programs can keep fulfilling their missions.

Without congressional action, many vulnerable Americans including seniors, veterans, and individuals with disabilities could see their SNAP benefits decrease

annually. I know my office received calls from concerned constituents whose SNAP benefits were adversely impacted by recent COLAs and so did my colleagues.

SNAP is a vital resource, helping keep food on the table for millions. And while some are busy trying to tear this program, I am proud to be working to protect and strengthen this lifeline so it can better serve some of our most vulnerable, including our low-income seniors, disabled people, and veterans.

Our COLAs Don't Count Act is a needed solution that will protect access to SNAP benefits for millions of Americans and help prevent food insecurity. Food isn't an optional expense, it's essential, which is why we must act now. I am proud to join my dear colleague Rep. Jan Schakowsky in addressing this critical issue," **said Congresswoman Gwen Moore.**

"Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs) are designed to ensure that Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits are not eroded by inflation, but, unfortunately, COLAs are being used to undermine these very programs," **said Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky.** "I am proud to join Congresswoman Moore in reintroducing the COLAs Don't Count Act, which protects our most vulnerable constituents from efforts to undermine the benefits that keep them afloat. Our bill would exclude income received from COLAs when calculating total income for the purposes of determining eligibility for Social Security, SSI, and SNAP benefits. This is commonsense legislation. Let's get it done."