

April 4, 2019



The Honorable Mitch McConnell

The Honorable Charles Schumer

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy



Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

The undersigned organizations and individuals write to express our strong support for Senator Steve Daines' (R-MT) and Rep. Kevin Brady's (R-TX) Jobs and Opportunity with Benefits and Services (JOBS) for Success Act (S.802/H.R.1753). This legislation would help lift vulnerable Americans out of poverty and into steady, full-time jobs by reforming and reauthorizing the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program—a federal welfare program that provides temporary financial assistance to working families.



Work is good for health and wellbeing because it increases feelings of confidence, purpose, responsibility, personal achievement, and self-worth. Studies consistently show that people who work longer are generally healthier than people who are out of work. In addition, work is the means by which individuals can provide the necessities of life for self and family. Work is honorable and is a key ingredient in the recipe for ending poverty.



Furthermore, work is a way for Americans to meaningfully contribute in their communities. Currently, unemployment is at record lows and many employers are struggling to find enough qualified employees to fill open positions. Now is the time to make reforms to our welfare system and help able individuals move out of poverty and into the workforce.



In 1996, President Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act into law which replaced the unsuccessful Aid to Families with Dependent Children program (AFDC) with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant program. Within a few years after its implementation, the bill was wildly successful in several areas. The number of people on welfare was cut in half,



employment of low-income single parents skyrocketed, and poverty rates of children and black Americans dropped to all-time lows. This demonstrated to the American people that strong work requirements are essential in reducing poverty and moving people off welfare.

Over the past several years, TANF work requirements have been weakened to the point where they are almost insignificant. In 2012, the Obama Administration issued an executive order allowing states to waive work requirements requiring able-bodied adults to work or prepare for work as a condition of receiving TANF aid. According to Senior Research Fellow Robert Rector of The Heritage Foundation, "Those work requirements were the heart of the reform's success: Welfare rolls dropped by half, and the poverty rate for black children reached its lowest level in history in the years following."



The JOBS Act would repair the TANF program and help low-income Americans find jobs by requiring states to develop personalized plans for employment and by making sure that federal and state funds are only spent on employment-related reasons.



For these reasons, we urge you to support the Jobs and Opportunity with Benefits and Services (JOBS) for Success Act (S.802/H.R.1753). By adding reforms to the TANF program, it enhances work requirements and requires people to partake in activities that will help them get back to work. As a result, this will reduce welfare dependence and help Americans live more dignified lives.



Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Tim Chapman, Executive Director
Heritage Action for America

Jonathan Bydlak, President
Coalition to Reduce Spending

Heather R. Higgins, CEO
Independent Women's Voice

Tim Andrews, Executive Director
Taxpayers Protection Alliance



Tom Schatz, President
Council for Citizens Against Government Waste

Pete Sepp, President
National Taxpayers Union

Maureen Blum, CEO
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Grover Norquist, President
Americans for Tax Reform

Adam Brandon, President
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David McIntosh, President
Club for Growth

Brent Gardner
Americans for Prosperity