

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1368

To amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to require that supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits be calculated with reference to the cost of the low-cost food plan as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 26, 2019

Ms. ADAMS (for herself, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. McEACHIN, Mr. WELCH, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. CUMMINGS, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. NORTON, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Ms. MOORE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. EVANS, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mr. KILMER, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. GOMEZ, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, Mr. RUSH, Mr. COHEN, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. OMAR, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. PETERS, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. POCAN, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. TONKO, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. GALLEG0, Mr. HECK, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Mr. ROUDA, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. PRESSLEY, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan, Mr. NADLER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. HAALAND, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. NEGUSE, Mr. RYAN, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. BASS, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. NEAL, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. KEATING, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. MCNERNEY, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. COX of California, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, and Mr. CRIST) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to require that supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits be calculated with reference to the cost of the low-cost food plan as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
 2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Closing the Meal Gap
 5 Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS.**

7 (a) CALCULATION OF PROGRAM BENEFITS.—The
 8 Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.)
 9 is amended—

10 (1) in section 3 (7 U.S.C. 2012)—

11 (A) by striking subsection (u),

12 (B) by redesignating subsections (n)
 13 through (t) as subsections (o) through (u), re-
 14 spectively, and

15 (C) by inserting after subsection (m) the
 16 following:

17 “(n) ‘Low-cost food plan’ means the diet required to
 18 feed a family of four persons, consisting of a man and
 19 a woman nineteen through fifty, a child six through eight,
 20 and a child nine through eleven years of age, determined

1 in accordance with the Secretary’s calculations. The cost
2 of such diet shall be the basis for uniform allotments for
3 all households regardless of their actual composition, ex-
4 cept that the Secretary shall—

5 “(1) make household-size adjustments (based
6 on the unrounded cost of such diet) taking into ac-
7 count economies of scale;

8 “(2) make cost adjustments in the low-cost food
9 plan for Hawaii and the urban and rural parts of
10 Alaska to reflect the cost of food in Hawaii and
11 urban and rural Alaska;

12 “(3) make cost adjustments in the separate
13 low-cost food plans for Guam, and the Virgin Is-
14 lands of the United States, to reflect the cost of food
15 in those States, but not to exceed the cost of food
16 in the 50 States and the District of Columbia; and

17 “(4) on October 1, 2019, and each October 1
18 thereafter, adjust the cost of the diet to reflect the
19 cost of the diet in the immediately preceding June,
20 and round the result to the nearest lower dollar in-
21 crement for each household size.”,

22 (2) in section 8(a) (7 U.S.C. 2017(a))—

23 (A) by striking “thrifty food plan” each
24 place it appears, and inserting “low-cost food
25 plan”, and

1 (B) by striking “8 percent” and inserting
2 “10 percent”,

3 (3) in section 16(c)(1)(A)(ii) (7 U.S.C.
4 2025(c)(1)(A)(ii))—

5 (A) in subclause (I) by striking “for fiscal
6 year 2014, at an amount not greater than \$37”
7 and inserting “for fiscal year 2019, at an
8 amount not greater than \$50”, and

9 (B) in subclause (II)—

10 (i) by striking “June 30, 2013” and
11 inserting “June 30, 2019”, and

12 (ii) by striking “thrifty food plan”
13 and inserting “low-cost food plan”, and

14 (4) in section 19(a)(2)(A) (7 U.S.C.
15 2028(a)(2)(A))—

16 (A) in clause (i) by striking “and” at the
17 end,

18 (B) in clause (ii)—

19 (i) by striking “each fiscal year there-
20 after” and inserting “each of the fiscal
21 years 2004 through 2019”, and

22 (ii) by striking the period at the end
23 and inserting a semicolon, and

24 (C) by adding at the end the following:

1 “(iii) for fiscal year 2020,
2 \$2,650,000,000; and

3 “(iv) subject to the availability of ap-
4 propriations under section 18(a), for each
5 fiscal year thereafter, the amount deter-
6 mined under clause (iii), as adjusted by the
7 percentage by which the low-cost food plan
8 has been adjusted under section 3(n)(4)
9 between June 30, 2019, and June 30 of
10 the immediately preceding fiscal year.”.

11 (b) STANDARD MEDICAL EXPENSE DEDUCTION.—
12 Section 5(e)(5) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
13 (7 U.S.C. 2014(e)(5)) is amended—

14 (1) in subparagraph (A) by striking “an excess
15 medical” and all that follows through the period at
16 the end, and inserting “a standard medical deduc-
17 tion or to a medical expense deduction of actual
18 costs for the allowable medical expenses incurred by
19 the elderly or disabled member, exclusive of special
20 diets.”, and

21 (2) by adding at the end the following:

22 “(D) The standard medical expense deduc-
23 tion shall be equal to \$140 for fiscal year 2020,
24 and for each subsequent fiscal year shall be
25 equal to the applicable amount for the imme-

1 diately preceding fiscal year as adjusted to re-
 2 flect changes for the 12-month period ending
 3 the preceding June 30 in the Consumer Price
 4 Index for All Urban Consumers: Medical Care
 5 published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of
 6 the Department of Labor, except that for any
 7 such fiscal year the State agency may establish
 8 a greater standard medical expense deduction
 9 that satisfies cost neutrality standards estab-
 10 lished by the Secretary for such fiscal year.”.

11 (c) ELIMINATION OF CAP OF EXCESS SHELTER EX-
 12 PENSES.—Section 5(e)(6) of the Food and Nutrition Act
 13 of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2014(e)(6)) is amended—

14 (1) by striking subparagraph (B), and
 15 (2) by redesignating subparagraphs (C) and
 16 (D) as subparagraphs (B) and (C), respectively.

17 (d) SNAP ELIGIBILITY FOR FULL AND PART-TIME
 18 STUDENTS; STUDENTS’ RESPONSIBLE FOR CARE OF DIS-
 19 ABLED MEMBERS OF HOUSEHOLDS.—Section 6 of the
 20 Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015) is
 21 amended—

22 (1) by striking subsection (e); and
 23 (2) in subsection (d)(2)(C) by striking “(except
 24 that any such person enrolled in an institution of
 25 higher education shall be ineligible to participate in

1 the supplemental nutrition assistance program un-
 2 less he or she meets the requirements of subsection
 3 (e) of this section”).

4 (e) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

5 (1) FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008.—The
 6 Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et
 7 seq.) is amended—

8 (A) in section 10 (7 U.S.C. 2019) by strik-
 9 ing “3(o)(4)” and inserting “3(p)(4)”,

10 (B) in section 11 (7 U.S.C. 2012)—

11 (i) in subsection (a)(2) by striking
 12 “3(s)(1)” and inserting “3(t)(1)”, and

13 (ii) in subsection (d)—

14 (I) by striking “3(s)(1)” each
 15 place it appears and inserting
 16 “3(t)(1)”, and

17 (II) by striking “3(s)(2)” each
 18 place it appears and inserting
 19 “3(t)(2)”,

20 (C) in section 19(a)(2)(A)(ii) (7 U.S.C.
 21 (a)(2)(A)(ii)) by striking “3(u)(4)” and insert-
 22 ing “3(n)(4)”, and

23 (D) in section 27(a)(2) (7 U.S.C.
 24 2036(a)(2))—

- 1 (i) in subparagraph (C) by striking
 2 “3(u)(4)” and inserting “3(n)(4)”, and
 3 (ii) in subparagraph (E) by striking
 4 “3(u)(4)” and inserting “3(n)(4)”.

5 (2) LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE
 6 ACT OF 1981.—Section 2605(f)(2)(A) of the Low-In-
 7 come Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 (42
 8 U.S.C. 8624(f)(2)(A)) is amended—

9 (A) by striking “5(e)(6)(C)(iv)(I)” and in-
 10 serting “5(e)(6)(B)(iv)(1)”, and

11 (B) by striking “(7 U.S.C.
 12 2014(e)(6)(C)(iv)(I))” and inserting “(7 U.S.C.
 13 2014(e)(6)(B)(iv)(I))”.

14 (f) TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.—The Food and Nu-
 15 trition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) is amended—

16 (1) in section 5(a) (7 U.S.C. 2014(a)) by strik-
 17 ing “3(n)(4)” each place it appears and inserting
 18 “3(m)(4)”,

19 (2) in section 8(f)(1)(A)(i) (7 U.S.C.
 20 2017(f)(1)(A)(i)) by striking “3(n)(5)” and inserting
 21 “3(m)(5)”, and

22 (3) in section 17(b)(1)(B)(iv)(III)(aa) (7 U.S.C.
 23 2016(b)(1)(B)(iv)(III)(aa)) by striking “3(n)” and
 24 inserting “3(m)”.

1 **SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICATION OF AMENDMENTS.**

2 (a) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Except as provided in sub-
3 section (b), this Act and the amendments made by this
4 Act shall take effect on October 1, 2019.

5 (b) APPLICATION OF AMENDMENTS.—The amend-
6 ments made by subsections (b), (c), and (f)(2) shall not
7 apply with respect to certification periods that begin be-
8 fore October 1, 2019.

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