

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051
<https://oversight.house.gov>

Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi **Subcommittee on Health Care and Financial Services** **“Examining the Growth of the Welfare State, Part I”** **February 11, 2025**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I’m looking forward to working with you on the important issues confronting our nation, particularly addressing the continuing failures and costs of our broken health care system.

I will confess that I had hoped our first hearing together would have tackled one of those vital issues, such as PBM or health insurance reform. Chairman Grothman, you and I have been working with Chairman Comer and the Democrats for years to try to rein in the abuses of Pharmacy Benefit Managers; we have shared further concerns about health insurers stopping payments for critical medical services, like with anesthesia this winter. But sadly, this committee is focused on antiquated debates about “welfare.”

I know what I am talking about when it comes to these safety nets because I have personal experience with SNAP’s predecessor – the Food Stamp program.

I came to our country with my family when I was three months old so my father could continue his education, and our family could embrace all the opportunities of America. But despite my family’s best efforts, it wasn’t always easy. When my family needed help, the American people provided it.

Today, my father is an engineering professor emeritus, having retired after 40 years of teaching at Bradley University in Peoria, IL. My brother is a doctor, and I am honored to represent the people of Illinois’ 8th district. That’s the American dream: the promise of a middle-class life with the opportunity for your children to have an even better life than you did.

That dream was possible for my family because of my parents’ hard work and the opportunities our country made possible. However, it was also because the American people established programs like SNAP and public housing so my family could be temporarily sustained in times of severe need.

For families like mine, access to public housing and SNAP served as a critical social safety net and allowed us to bounce back from financial adversity. It remains today true for tens of millions of struggling Americans.

House and Senate Republicans are discussing a [\\$2 trillion cut](#) to Medicaid – almost one-third of funding; this does not sound to me like rooting out waste and fraud. It sounds like forcing

tens of millions of children, pregnant women, seniors, and people from programs they desperately need.

Helping our neighbors is good economic policy. In 2025, USDA [found](#) that in an economic downturn, every dollar in additional SNAP benefits leads to an increase of \$1.54 in gross domestic product. This doesn't surprise me. Social safety net programs do not encourage laziness; they empower Americans to succeed on their own.

The demonization of benefit recipients is appalling. We will hear shortly the untrue characterizations of lower-income people made by the majority, which undermine the credibility of the reforms offered. People on public benefits are not lazy, they're not dumb, and they're not bad people. Often, like my own family, they've fallen on hard times and need a hand up. The help they seek, they hope, is temporary. The difference we make in their lives lasts a lifetime.

I'm not going to silently acquiesce to this Congress, turning its back on hungry, frightened, cold children or their families anywhere in our country who need help, in order for the majority to pay for tax cuts for special interests. I hope that this hearing shines light on the good work our country does in feeding, housing, and caring for its people.

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Contact: Alexandra Bell, Communications Director (202) 226-5181

