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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R.

To amend the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to repeal a certain disqualification to receive benefits under title IV of the Social Security Act and benefits under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008; and to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to provide that incarcerated individuals who are scheduled to be released from an institution within 30 days shall be considered to be a household for purposes of such Act.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. COHEN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee
on _____

A BILL

To amend the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to repeal a certain disqualification to receive benefits under title IV of the Social Security Act and benefits under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008; and to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to provide that incarcerated individuals who are scheduled to be released from an institution within 30 days shall be considered to be a household for purposes of such Act.

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 “Making Essentials
5 Available and Lawful (MEAL) Act of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. TANF ASSISTANCE AND SNAP BENEFITS.**

7 (a) REPEAL OF BAN ON ASSISTANCE.—Section 115
8 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Rec-
9 onciliation Act of 1996 (21 U.S.C. 862a) is repealed.

10 (b) EFFECT ON STATE ELECTIONS TO OPT OUT OR
11 LIMIT PERIOD OF PROHIBITION.—

12 (1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

13 (A) the term “State” has the meaning
14 given the term in section 115(e) of the Personal
15 Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconcili-
16 ation Act of 1996 (21 U.S.C. 862a(e)) (as in
17 effect on the day before the date of enactment
18 of this Act); and

19 (B) the term “TANF assistance or SNAP
20 benefits” means assistance or benefits referred
21 to in section 115(a) of the Personal Responsi-
22 bility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act
23 of 1996 (as in effect on the day before the date
24 of enactment of this Act).

1 (2) EFFECT ON STATE POLICIES.—Any law en-
2 acted by a State under the authority under subpara-
3 graph (A) or (B) of subsection (d)(1) of section 115
4 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Oppor-
5 tunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (21 U.S.C. 862a),
6 and any State law, policy, or regulation that imposes
7 conditions on eligibility for the supplemental nutri-
8 tion assistance program and temporary assistance
9 for needy families program based on an individual’s
10 conviction of an offense related to a controlled sub-
11 stance, shall have no force or effect.

12 **SEC. 3. MODIFICATION OF DEFINITION OF HOUSEHOLD**
13 **FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING SNAP**
14 **BENEFITS.**

15 Section 3(m)(5) of the Food and Nutrition Act of
16 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012(m)(5)) is amended by adding at the
17 end the following:

18 “(H) Incarcerated individuals are who
19 scheduled to be released from an institution
20 within 30 days.”.