



## ***Improving Access to Nutrition Act of 2025***

**Introduced By:** Senators Peter Welch (D-Vt.); Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY.); Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.); John Fetterman (D-Pa.); Alex Padilla (D-Calif.); Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.); Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.); Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.); Ron Wyden (D-Ore.)

### **Background:**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides critical nutrition and food benefits support to over [40 million](#) low-income Americans—nearly 12.6% of the U.S. population. However, punitive time limits on SNAP eligibility criteria for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) exacerbate racial inequities and fail to accurately capture participants' health issues and family status.

Under current law, ABAWDs between 18 to 49 years old are prohibited from receiving more than three months of SNAP benefits during a three-year period if they do not report at least 30 hours of work per week. These punitive requirements disproportionately impact women and people of color—roughly half of all low-income ABAWDs—and are often [counterproductive](#) given SNAP's [proven](#) effectiveness in improving economic stability, food security, and wellbeing for participants. [Research](#) as also indicated that time limits for low-income ABAWDs do not lead to a meaningful increase in employment and decrease participation in SNAP, removing a crucial safety net for low-income participants who often have [little to no safety net](#) outside of SNAP benefits.

Additionally, labels used to determine eligibility for SNAP often fail to fully assess participants' health issues or family status. For example, the "able-bodied" label does not accurately capture disability status, as 27% of low-income ABAWDs who were employed all 12 months of 2022 reported a disability. Similarly, the "without dependents" label does not account for over 40% of low-income ABAWDs who are responsible for the care of children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities.

### **Legislation:**

The *Improving Access to Nutrition Act* would help more Americans access SNAP, known as 3SquaresVT in Vermont, by eliminating the punitive three-month time limit on SNAP eligibility to allow Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents to receive benefits for longer than three months even if they are unable to find work. The bill would also repeal additional eligibility criteria imposed during the 2023 debt ceiling deal, which would impose the three-month rule on adults up to age 54 over the next few years.

### **Supporting Organizations:**

The *Improving Access to Nutrition Act of 2025* is endorsed by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC).