



★ ★ COMMITTEE ON ★ ★
WAYS AND MEANS
CHAIRMAN PAUL RYAN

Chairman Boustany Announces Hearing on Ideas to Improve Welfare Programs to Help More Families Find Work and Escape Poverty

Today, Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee Chairman Charles Boustany (R-LA) announced that the subcommittee will hold a hearing titled, *“Next Steps for Welfare Reform: Ideas to Improve Temporary Assistance for Needy Families to Help More Families Find Work and Escape Poverty.”* **The hearing will take place at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 30, in room 1100 of the Longworth House Office Building.**

In view of the limited time available, oral testimony at this hearing will be from invited witnesses only. Witnesses will include experts who administer the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or who provide support to states operating the program. However, any individual or organization not scheduled for an oral appearance may submit a written statement for consideration by the committee for inclusion in the printed record of the hearing.

In announcing the hearing, Chairman Boustany stated:

“Welfare reforms in the 1990s helped millions of low-income parents leave welfare for work. Not only did welfare caseloads drop by more than half as a result, but the share of families with children who were living in poverty fell significantly as well. Despite this progress, recent evidence suggests states may not be helping as many welfare recipients find work or prepare for work as they have in the past. In addition, Congress hasn’t undertaken a full assessment of the program since 2006. It’s time for Congress to review this program and develop ways to help more low-income families find work and escape poverty.”

BACKGROUND:

The TANF program is designed to end the dependence of needy families on government benefits by promoting work, marriage, and personal responsibility. Unlike its predecessor, the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, which was primarily a cash welfare program for low-income families with children, the 1996 welfare reform law created TANF to fund a variety of services to help low-income parents get jobs and become self-sufficient. States are required to engage 50 percent of adults in TANF families in work activities such as employment, on-the-job training, job search, and vocational education.

As a result of these and other reforms, in the years following the 1996 law’s passage, welfare caseloads declined significantly, employment among low-income families increased, and poverty declined.

However, recent evidence suggests states are not engaging many adults receiving TANF in services designed to help them get jobs and move up the economic ladder. In recent years, states have [reported](#) zero hours of work—or participation in activities leading to work—for over half of the adults receiving TANF assistance each month. Recent [reports](#) have highlighted ways states have used loopholes in current law to sharply reduce the share of adults they must engage in work or work activities.

FOCUS OF THE HEARING:

This hearing will focus on how states assist welfare recipients today, ways to increase state efforts to engage more recipients in work and activities leading to work, and how these efforts can help these individuals become self-sufficient, escape poverty, and move up the economic ladder.

DETAILS FOR SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS:

Please Note: Any person(s) and/or organization(s) wishing to submit for the hearing record must follow the appropriate link on the hearing page of the Committee website and complete the informational forms. From the Committee homepage, <http://waysandmeans.house.gov>, select “Hearings.” Select the hearing for which you would like to submit, and click on the link entitled, “Please click here to submit a statement or letter for the record.” Once you have followed the online instructions, submit all requested information. Attach your submission as a Word document, in compliance with the formatting requirements listed below, **by May 14, 2015**. Finally, please note that due to the change in House mail policy, the U.S. Capitol Police will refuse sealed-package deliveries to all House Office Buildings. For questions, or if you encounter technical problems, please call (202) 225-1721 or (202) 225-3625.

FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS:

The Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record. As always, submissions will be included in the record according to the discretion of the Committee. The Committee will not alter the content of your submission, but we reserve the right to format it according to our guidelines. Any submission provided to the Committee by a witness, any supplementary materials submitted for the printed record, and any written comments in response to a request for written comments must conform to the guidelines listed below. Any submission or supplementary item not in compliance with these guidelines will not be printed, but will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

1. All submissions and supplementary materials must be provided in Word format and **MUST NOT** exceed a total of 10 pages, including attachments. Witnesses and submitters are advised that the Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record.
2. Copies of whole documents submitted as exhibit material will not be accepted for printing. Instead, exhibit material should be referenced and quoted or paraphrased. All exhibit material not meeting these specifications will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.
3. All submissions must include a list of all clients, persons, and/or organizations on whose behalf the witness appears. A supplemental sheet must accompany each submission listing the name, company, address, telephone, and fax numbers of each witness.

The Committee seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202-225-1721 or 202-226-3411 TTD/TTY in advance of the event (four business days notice is requested). Questions with regard to special accommodation needs in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats) may be directed to the Committee as noted above.

Note: All Committee advisories and news releases are available online at <http://www.waysandmeans.house.gov/>.