



Dear Republican Study Committee,

March 25, 2011

On behalf of Independent Women's Voice, I thank you for your leadership in advancing the Welfare Reform Act of 2011, H.R. 1167. This piece of legislation would cut spending, curb entitlement growth, and limit the size and scope of the federal government. Furthermore, welfare reform is vital to increasing self-sufficiency, promoting family and economic growth, and strengthening traditional values.

Ronald Reagan once said, "We should measure welfare's success by how many people leave welfare, not by how many are added." According to this standard, our current welfare system is not successful. In the two decades leading up to 2008, welfare spending grew by 292 percent. The rolls of federal entitlement programs are growing, not shrinking. Instead of winning the "War on Poverty," the 77 different federal welfare programs that exist today help create a lifestyle of dependency, and in the process have contributed to the deterioration of the American family.

Women have a particular interest in advancing meaningful reform to our welfare laws. Single women with dependents face higher poverty rates than any other subgroup in the nation. Yet this isn't a reason to create a wasteful, duplicative welfare system that breeds dependency. It is for the sake of these women, and other Americans, that reform is needed that rolls back government's involvement and instead creates a robust, growing economy with more opportunities for all.

The best welfare program is job creation, which will lead American women and their families to true economic stability.

A social safety net is meant to provide temporary assistance for Americans in dire circumstances. It works best when it encourages recipients to seek and obtain employment so that they can once again become valuable contributors to the American economy and reach self-sufficiency. When big government constantly intervenes and grows its role, it only serves to feed the spirit-crushing nature of poverty by communicating to the impoverished that they are not capable of contributing to society.

When people talk about the American dream, they usually do not mention food stamps. Instead, they talk about providing for oneself and one's family, and having the freedom to succeed and pursue happiness. That is why the extended work requirements in the Welfare Act of 2011, modeled after the reform legislation of 1996, are important.

Opponents to the welfare reform legislation of 1996 proclaimed that the streets would fill with hungry children, and that the impoverished would suffer. Instead, 2.7 million families moved off of welfare because they had the ability to independently provide for themselves. We can now repeat and further this kind of success. We encourage all Members of Congress to vote YES to the Welfare Reform Act of 2011 to put our country back on the path to prosperity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "HRH", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Heather R. Higgins
President and CEO
Independent Women's Voice