

The Nourishing Our Golden Years Act (S.2085)

Introduced by Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Susan Collins (R-ME)

There is a growing field of research that indicates older Americans are at increased risk of hunger and malnutrition. In 2014 alone, 15.8% or 10.2 million older Americans age 60 and up experienced at least some level of food insecurity. Food insecure older adults often resort to coping strategies to stretch a budget, this may mean buying low cost low nutrient foods or forgoing medications. Food insecure seniors experience more physician visits, emergency room visits and hospitalizations than their non-food insecure counterparts. In addition, food insecure seniors are more likely to experience depression, to report a heart attack, to develop asthma and to report an experience of congestive heart failure.

In order to help address food insecurity, Congress authorized the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). CSFP serves nearly 700,000 low-income adults age 60 and up each year with monthly shelf-stable, nutrient rich foods. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) uses its buying power to purchase specific nutrient-rich foods at wholesale prices for distribution to eligible seniors. The average cost of a CSFP food package is approximately \$20, while the retail value of each package is closer to \$50.

While CSFP application requirements vary by state, current [federal regulation](#) requires recertification of eligible seniors every 6 or 12 months depending on the state. This requirement is burdensome for states, administering agencies, as well as seniors. Sometimes it results in the unintentional removal of seniors from the program. Older Americans who qualify for CSFP are generally on a fixed income with little to no change in income on a yearly basis. Some states that administer CSFP are interested in extending the certification period in order to reduce administrative burden and reduce the churn of individuals who qualify for CSFP.

What will the Nourishing Our Golden Years Act do?

- Set a minimum CSFP certification period of one year; and
- Provide states the flexibility to extend the CSFP certification period beyond the set minimum, so long as the participant's address, interest in the program and income is evaluated annually.

To date, the following organizations are supportive of the bill:

- AARP
- The National Commodity Supplemental Food Program Association
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- Alliance to End Hunger
- Bread for the World
- Defeat Malnutrition Today
- Feeding America
- Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
- Hunger Free America
- MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
- Meals on Wheels America
- National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)
- National Council on Aging (NCOA)
- Hunger-Free Pennsylvania
- National Foundation To End Senior Hunger (NFESH)
- DSM North America

For more information or to cosponsor, please contact Sarah_Khasawinah@aging.senate.gov with Senator Collins or Samantha_Koehler@aging.senate.gov with Senator Casey.