

Barbara Myzick
Testimony Before the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging
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Chairman Casey, Ranking Member Scott, and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today and for listening to voices like mine as you work to address food insecurity among older adults. My name is Barbara Myzick, and I am 71 years old. I am a former girl scouts' leader of over forty years, and I live in Ashley, Pennsylvania with my husband, Jerry. We have three children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. My grandson, Nathan, comes over to visit often. Nathan has ocular implants and sometimes his speech is not too good. Nathan helps us with things around my house, like taking out the garbage or helping to carry the groceries- things that are a little more difficult for us than they used to be. He always picks up my canes and he is there for me.

My husband and I have been going through some medical complications these last few years and we know we need to eat healthier foods. We both have diabetes, and the sweet foods aren't good for us, but healthy food is so expensive these days. This summer was especially rough for our family. My husband has been in the hospital three times since July and was moved to a nursing home where he stayed for three weeks. He has COPD and doesn't take care of it too well, but he uses oxygen to help him, so he doesn't run out of breath too easily. He also has Parkinson's disease and seizures, so I do all of the driving. Our kids help out, but not as much now because they are all working.

My grandson Nathan goes to the farmer's market with me to use the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program vouchers and helps me carry the bags. My balance isn't great, but I manage alright with two canes. I used to garden a lot, but I can't do it by myself anymore. That's one of the reasons I really like going to the farmer's market. It gets me out a little with my

grandson and I get to talk to the farmers about how they get some of their things to grow so good. I also like that I can pick out the produce that I want. I am worried that if I stop being able to drive due to health issues in the future, I won't be able to go to the farmer's market anymore.

My husband and I also get the Senior Food Box through the Weinberg Northeast Regional Food Bank. I pick up our Senior Food Box once a month from the church. My neighbor or my grandson come with me because the box is heavy, and I can't carry it with my canes. The food in the box is very helpful, but I wish it had fresh produce instead of all being canned. It's hard keeping a diet that's good for our health because that food can be expensive.

Food is so expensive these days. I know that the Weinberg Food Bank and my daughter will help out if we need it. My daughter will call me when she is heading to the store to ask what I want. I don't want her to have to do this too much because it's her money, but sometimes I will ask for things that I can't really get through the Senior Farmers' Market Voucher or the Senior Food Boxes, like meat or more fresh vegetables and fruit.

We used to get SNAP, which we really liked because you could still have some fresh fruit and choice. But I've fallen two times and the last time was when it was time to recertify my paperwork. I tumbled backwards and cracked my head on the sidewalk. Because I fell and hit my head, I didn't have a chance to do the recertification. There was so much paperwork, and I was so overwhelmed with it all.

I recently also had to enroll my husband in a program called LIFE through Medicaid and Medicare. We received a notice that he didn't qualify because the paperwork wasn't sent in on time, even though we did send it in. They eventually approved it, and he will soon receive more support in the home and at a local center. I hope getting out of the house brings back some of his

spark. I'll also be able to go to more of my appointments and to spend more time with my grandchildren when he goes to the local center.

I appreciate the food programs and the LIFE program. They really help us, especially when we are done paying bills and low on food. Thank you for the opportunity to share my story and for your efforts to help support older adults like me in accessing healthy and affordable food.