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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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The Honorable John R. Kasich
Governor, State of Ohio
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Governor Kasich:

I write to seek clarification regarding your decision to waive work requirements for Supplemental Nutrition Aid Program (SNAP) recipients for select counties within the state. I am concerned your selection of counties has had a disproportionately negative impact on Ohio's minority communities.

Federal law allows states to request SNAP waivers on time limits for recipients, able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs), living in counties or cities with an unemployment rate above 10 percent or in an area with insufficient jobs. For the past two years, Ohio has only requested waivers for rural counties, excluding urban and other eligible counties and cities.

This is particularly problematic as 75% of African Americans live in eight urban counties, none of which received a waiver. What is even more alarming is that many of these counties have higher unemployment rates than some of those that received waivers.

States are allowed to request time-limit waivers if its average unemployment rate for the past two years was at least 20 percent above the national average, which is currently 6.8%. For example, Cleveland's average unemployment rate during this time period has been 8.5%, making it eligible for a waiver. Yet it received none.

Recently, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released a report showing that Ohio ranks sixth in the nation for people living with food insecurity. Requesting time-limit waivers for all counties and cities eligible for such extensions would certainly reduce that insecurity.

I represent a district with the highest poverty rate in the state. I've heard the stories from my constituents who struggle each month to pay for basic necessities like medicine and food. Without question, Ohio should take advantage of every opportunity to mitigate these challenges and feed those in need.

Clarification on your selection process for time-limit waivers would be appreciated.

Sincerely,



Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress