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Cassidy, Brown Announce First Update to Social Security Income Program for Disabled, Elderly Americans Since 1980s

Senators Leading New Coalition to End Outdated Restrictions that Punish Americans for Saving Money

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Bill Cassidy, M.D. (R-LA) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH) announced the first bipartisan, bicameral push in decades to reform the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, which has not been updated in nearly 40 years and currently punishes older and disabled Americans for saving for emergencies and their futures. The senators' bipartisan SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act would update SSI's asset limits for the first time since the 1980s to ensure disabled and elderly Americans are able to prepare themselves for a financial emergency without putting the benefits they rely on to live at risk.

"Someone who is disabled should not have to choose between a better job and losing their safety net because of outdated rules," **said Dr. Cassidy**. "This is an easy fix that encourages work, allows people to save, and lifts people out of poverty."

"SSI's arbitrary and outdated rules make no sense. The government shouldn't punish seniors and Ohioans with disabilities who do the right thing and save money," **said Senator Brown**. "It's long past time we end these out-of-date government restrictions and allow Americans on SSI to save for emergencies and for their futures without putting the benefits they rely on to live at risk."

The current SSI program punishes disabled and elderly Americans for working, saving for the future, and getting married. Right now, individuals receiving SSI benefits are limited to \$2,000 in assets; for married couples, it's \$3,000. The average current monthly benefit is \$585 for individuals. For approximately 60%

"It is long-past time for Congress to update SSI's asset limits, which have become overly restrictive and prevent the accumulation of even the smallest amount of personal savings. AARP therefore urges Congress to pass your SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act as soon as possible," **said Bill Sweeney, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs, AARP.**

"A workforce of diverse backgrounds, skills, and experiences accelerates innovation and makes us more competitive. We thank Senators Brown and Cassidy, as well as Representatives Fitzpatrick and Higgins for advancing the SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act – a bipartisan effort that will update asset limits for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and help promote economic equity. Microsoft, and the workforce as a whole, benefit from the removal of unnecessary barriers – allowing the talent of disabled workers to flourish and be a part of our teams and our supply chain," **said Rylin Rodgers, Disability Policy Advisor, Microsoft.**

"BPC Action commends this effort by Sens. Brown (D-OH) and Cassidy (R-LA) and Reps. Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Higgins (D-NY) and urges Congress to act on long-overdue bipartisan measures to modernize the Supplemental Security Income program for seniors and Americans with disabilities," **said Michele Stockwell, President of Bipartisan Policy Center Action.**

"SSI provides a vital lifeline to nearly 8 million low-income Americans with disabilities and older adults. But its outdated asset limits trap people in poverty, punish them for getting married, create barriers to work, and constrain their financial independence. Beneficiaries cannot save for necessary expenses like a security deposit or car repairs without the risk of losing their benefits—leaving many just one emergency away from homelessness and hunger. We strongly endorse the bipartisan SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act because it will give Americans with disabilities more freedom to build the futures they want and deserve," **said Darcy Milburn, Director of Social Security and Healthcare Policy at The Arc of the United States.**

"Current policy imposes a difficult choice on Americans living with disabilities: spend their money now or lose access to essential support. This is nonsensical and denies some people the ability to save for future needs and opportunities. The SSI savings limit is long overdue for reform. A big thank you to the senators and representatives who are leading the way to a more humane policy," **said Galen Carey, Vice President of Government Relations, National Association of Evangelicals.**

"JPMorgan Chase, like many companies, wants to attract and retain the very best qualified people of all abilities. But the current Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program asset and income limits are so low that they create barriers for people with disabilities to join the workforce, work to their fullest potential, and save for the future. We applaud the bipartisan, bicameral reintroduction of the Savings Penalty Elimination Act, which would make common sense updates to the outdated rules for SSI benefits to reflect current economic conditions and keep pace with inflation going forward. These changes would play a crucial role in expanding economic opportunity and mobility for people with disabilities," **said Bryan Gill, Head of the Office of Disability Inclusion, JPMorgan Chase.**

"The U.S. Chamber of Commerce supports the SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act, which would help employers fill many open jobs with older, experienced American workers who wish to stay in the workforce by raising the current asset limits for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program eligibility," **said Chantel Sheaks, Vice President, Retirement Policy, U.S. Chamber of Commerce.**

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