**Set a Work Requirement for Able-Bodied Adult Food Stamp Recipients**

**Heritage Recommendation:**
Reform the food stamps program to include a work requirement for able-bodied adults. Able-bodied adults must work, prepare for work, or look for work for a minimum number of hours each month in order to receive benefits. This proposal saves approximately $5.4 billion annually, and $54 billion over 10 years.

**Rationale:**
The food stamps program is one of the largest of the federal government’s roughly 80 means-tested welfare programs. Food stamp spending increased from roughly $20 billion in FY 2000 to nearly $40 billion in FY 2007. Between FY 2008 and FY 2012, it doubled again to approximately $80 billion. Some of the growth in food stamp spending was due to the recession, but government policies have also made it easier for people to get on the rolls and remain there.

Food stamp assistance should be directed to those most in need. Able-bodied adults who receive food stamps should be required to work, prepare for work, or look for work in exchange for receiving assistance. Not only do work requirements help ensure that food stamps are directed to those who need them most, a work requirement also promotes the principle of self-sufficiency by directing individuals towards work.

**Additional Reading:**

**Calculations:**
Savings are calculated based on the current level of 4.5 million able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) receiving food stamps in FY 2013 at a monthly benefit of $200 (see Characteristic of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2013, Table A.15, p. 51, http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ops/Characteristics2013.pdf). This adds up to a total cost of roughly $10.8 billion annually. It is projected that a work requirement would result in the ABAWD caseload dropping by half, yielding an annual savings of $5.4 billion.

### SAVINGS IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS

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