



For Immediate Release

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Date: February 19, 2018

Who Benefits from the Public Benefits Reform Bills?

Milwaukee—Community Advocates Public Policy Institute strongly opposes the slate of Special Session bills aimed at reforming the state’s public benefits offerings. These bills come with a high price tag, unfairly punish struggling Wisconsinites, and simply won’t get people back to work.

This week, the Legislature plans to vote on ten bills that would place additional barriers on those who rely on our public safety net and would do nothing to enable low-income Wisconsinites to find good-paying jobs. The package of bills threatens families’ access to food, health care, housing, and transportation while costing state taxpayers an estimated \$90 million.

“It may sound appealing to ‘reform public benefits,’ but when you look at the details you’ll find these bills will do more harm than good,” said Andi Elliott, CEO of Community Advocates. “We are ready and willing to work with lawmakers to find more effective ways to improve these programs and lift Wisconsinites out of poverty and into prosperity.”

Research has shown that the majority of non-elderly, non-disabled individuals on Medicaid are already working, but rely on Medicaid/BadgerCare for their health care because they cannot afford coverage on their own or through their employer.

“Let’s work on bringing down the costs of health care, whether it’s accessed through private insurance or BadgerCare, and raising the wages of low-income workers,” Elliott said. “Punishing low-wage workers with more red tape and putting taxpayers on the hook for \$90 million is the wrong way to go.”

Community Advocates established the Public Policy Institute in 2008 to work toward preventing and reducing poverty while improving the quality of life for individuals and families in Milwaukee and throughout Wisconsin. The Public Policy Institute targets poverty by changing relevant public policies and laws; preventing its effects through public health efforts; and working to increase opportunity and wellness for low-income people by fostering factors related to success, resilience, and well-being.

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