



# **Supplemental Security Income Restoration Act Reintroduced By Duckworth, Durbin, Others**

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**Duckworth, Durbin Join Brown, Senate Colleagues in Introducing Historic  
Legislation to Update Long-Neglected Social Security Program to Ensure Older  
Adults & People with Disabilities Are No Longer Trapped in Poverty**



WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Dick Durbin (D-IL), joined U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) in re-introducing the *Supplemental Security Income Restoration Act* to bring the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program into the 21st Century and ensure disabled and elderly Americans are able to live with dignity and respect. An often-forgotten part of America's Social Security system, SSI is a federal program that provides vital income assistance to nearly 8

million elderly and disabled Americans with low-incomes and limited resources, including over 1 million disabled children. But due to decades of shameful federal neglect, the program now consigns millions to deep and enduring poverty, when it should instead offer a lifeline out of it.

“Right now, countless seniors and disabled Americans are facing financial hardships and are forced to stretch their Social Security checks on food, housing and medication—and these difficult choices between basic needs are only intensified by the pandemic,” said Duckworth. “I’ll keep doing all I can to support the Supplemental Security Income program and help make sure Illinoisans receive these critical benefits. I’m proud to help introduce the *SSI Restoration Act* alongside my colleagues so that we can help improve the lives of the many Americans who are struggling to make ends meet.”

“Supplemental Security Income helps support millions of elderly Americans and those living with disabilities, but improvements to this critical lifeline are long overdue. The Supplemental Security Income Restoration Act would raise the maximum level of benefit to 100 percent of the federal poverty level while making additional program enhancements to ensure SSI serves its original intention: Keeping our most vulnerable populations out of poverty,” said Durbin. “I am proud to support this bill and stand by the 226,000 Illinois SSI recipients who will benefit.”

“The promise of Social Security is to ensure that no one in America should live in poverty – least of all our nation's seniors and people with disabilities. By updating SSI we can deliver on this promise and ensure disabled and elderly Ohioans are able to live with dignity. Congress must prioritize these long-overdue reforms as part of upcoming recovery legislation,” said Brown.

The *SSI Restoration Act* would:

- Raise SSI's sub-poverty-level monthly benefits, currently \$794 per month, to 100% of the federal poverty level--a 31% increase--and index them to inflation;
- Update and index the assets individuals or couples may have up to \$10,000 and \$20,000, respectively. The current limit of \$2,000 for an individual and \$3,000 for a couple has not been updated since 1989;
- Update and index SSI's income rules -- which have never been updated since the program was signed into law in 1972. These reforms will allow individuals to earn up to \$399 a month from working, and up to \$123 a month in assistance from other sources: including Social Security, veterans' benefits and pension payments without being subject to a benefit reduction. These reforms will reward, not penalize, SSI recipients who want to earn additional income to provide for themselves and their families;

- Eliminate the marriage penalty and increase the benefit for married couples to double the individual rate, to put marriage equality within reach for SSI beneficiaries; and
- Eliminate benefit reductions that penalize beneficiaries who receive in-kind help from friends or family, such as groceries or a place to stay.

Updating SSI isn't just the right thing to do—it's also incredibly popular, with each of these reforms enjoying overwhelming bipartisan support. Recent polling by Data for Progress in partnership with The Century Foundation finds that [more than 7 in 10 Americans](#) support each of these common-sense and long-overdue measures to update SSI.

In April, Duckworth and Durbin joined Brown in [calling for the Biden administration](#) to make historic and much-needed expansions and improvements to the SSI program as part of “building back better.” Several key elements of the *SSI Restoration Act* were [endorsed by President Biden](#) during the campaign.

Right now, eligible individuals may receive a maximum benefit of \$794 (\$1,157 for couples) per month. The average current monthly benefit is \$585 for individuals, which is a little over \$7,000 per year. For approximately 60% of recipients, SSI is their only source of income.

Duckworth, Durbin and Brown are joined by U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Robert Casey (D-PA), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Ed Markey (D-MA), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Patty Murray (D-WA), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Tina Smith (D-MN), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Ron Wyden (D-OR),

The bill has been endorsed by: Justice in Aging, AARP, AFL-CIO, AFSCME Retirees, Easter Seals, United Auto Workers (UAW), Leading Age, Homeless Action Center, Medicare Rights Center, National Alliance to End Homelessness, National Center for Law & Economic Justice, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare (NCPSSM), National Council on Aging, National Low Income Housing Coalition, National Women’s Law Center, New York Legal Assistance Group, Social Security Works, Services & Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Elders (SAGE), Strengthen Social Security Coalition, the Women’s Institute for a Secure Retirement and [over 87 national organizations](#).