

2002 MAY -6 P 3: 02

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

The Honourable Members
Cambridge City Council
Cambridge, MA 02139

2
Kathryn S. Podgers
148 Pearl St.
Cambridge MA 02139
617 864-0106

Dear Council Members,

I want to bring to your attention the hunger that recipients of SSI who are ill and unable to work because of their disability are experiencing. The Food Stamp method of qualifying for benefits discriminates against those disabled and unable to work as a result to their disability because there is no way they can legally show enough 'countable' expenses to qualify for max food stamp benefits.

Let me give you some figures, which I usually refer to as "numbers". I believe these "maximum" numbers to be true, but ~~I heard a rumor that~~ the Maximum may have gone up... (I wrote this 5/22/01 and the max SSI benefit has changed but the basic problem of needing 'expenses' that that exceed SSI income in order to qualify for max food stamp benefits is still the problem)

I, and other individuals, receive the Max SSI payment of \$644 per month.

This includes the max Federal payment + the State of Mass addition.

This is based on two conditions, 1., that one is unable to work due to their disability, and 2. That one lacks income.

The max food stamp benefit for an individual is \$130 per month. \$4.27 daily.

But in order to qualify for this an individual needs to "prove" several hundred dollars of expenses over the SSI "income" of \$644.

For example, although I have expenses that exceed my \$644 income, the Food Stamp program counts \$620 of my expenses toward qualifying for

J

FS. This leaves me \$24 for all my other expenses, but only "gets" me \$86 monthly, or \$2.82 daily to buy food.

If I spend another \$60 dollars in "proven" medical expenses monthly, the FS program subtracts \$35 and "counts" \$25 toward qualifying for FS benefits.

That now brings my total "countable" expenses to \$645, \$1 more than my income of \$644. Does this now qualify me for max FS? NO! It only "gets" me \$102 monthly!! And it brings my actual expenses to \$680!!

So how many expenses over the Max SSI income of \$644 must I "prove" in order to qualify for the maximum FS benefit? I believe it must be several hundred dollars.

Now, the problem here is, if I am spending all of my \$644, how can I "prove" I spent more? It seems built in to the FS method of qualifying that those on SSI can't possibly qualify for max food stamps.

The fact remains that it is difficult to eat on \$4.27 daily, but it is not possible to eat on \$2.82 daily. I need the maximum.

I believe, that persons who are medically disabled, and cannot work because of their disability, are nevertheless hungry, and must eat. Some of these people, like myself, have an incurable, untreatable disease, but we are still hungry, we want to eat.

The food bank program is not designed to feed long term sick people. Much of the food they have is "fortified" for 'good nutrition', but these very additives are deadly to certain sick people. While this program might work for healthy people who are temporarily out of work, with young children, or low pay, the food bank food is not suitable for persons with some illnesses, and makes them sick.

I believe, therefore, that when a medically disabled person has expenses that reach 3/4 (2/3rds would be better) of their SSI income, they should automatically qualify for max food stamp benefits. Which is only \$4.27 a day anyway. This would save the taxpayer money in the long run, because "free" legal services attorneys, hearing officers, and even "courtroom appeals before judges" expenses would be avoided.

J

Of course, I realize that many disabled are too sick and tired to appeal, but is that right? I mean to deny them enough to eat, knowing they are least able to mount an appeal? Isn't this a human rights abuse, and a violation of both the UN's and the World Health organization's policy on providing adequate food for the disabled?

To request the Cambridge Delightful
to the NH legislature to
100%

I am therefore requesting you file a bill, or file a bill for me, that would enable SSI recipients, who are unable to work due to their disability and have only SSI limited income, to automatically qualify for maximum Food Stamp benefits when their Food Stamp 'countable' expenses reach 2/3rds or 3/4s of their SSI income.

The SSI administration can and does, upon request, provide a letter that not only states the amount of SSI payment, but that the recipient receives the SSI for a disability. (This is the letter that is used for applying for homestead protection)

Therefore, SSI recipients would provide their SSI letter stating both income and disability and show 2/3rds or 3/4s of their SSI income to be 'countable' food stamp qualifying expenses in order to automatically qualify for the maximum Food stamp benefits.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely

Kathryn S Podgers

Kathryn S. Podgers
May 6, 2002

Communication #2

A communication was received from Kathryn S. Podgers, requesting the City Council to file a bill that would allow disabled SSI recipients to qualify for maximum food stamp benefits.

In City Council May 13, 2002

REFERRED TO ORDER #7.



City of Cambridge

O-7.

IN CITY COUNCIL

May 13, 2002

COUNCILLOR DECKER
VICE MAYOR DAVIS
COUNCILLOR GALLUCCIO
COUNCILLOR MAHER
COUNCILLOR MURPHY
COUNCILLOR REEVES
COUNCILLOR SIMMONS
MAYOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR TOOMEY

WHEREAS: Persons who cannot work because of their disability and rely on Social Security for their only income need to be able to qualify for maximum Food Stamp benefits; and

WHEREAS: The current formula for calculating foodstamp eligibility does not allow recipients of SSI for disabilities to receive the maximum amount because their income is not high enough to reach the qualifying "countable expenses;" now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the Cambridge City Council urge the Cambridge delegation to the Massachusetts Legislature to file a bill, that would enable SSI recipients, who are unable to work due to their disability and have only SSI limited income, to automatically qualify for maximum Food Stamp benefits when their Food Stamp countable expenses reach 3/4s (or 2/3rds) of their SSI income. Disabled SSI recipients would provide their SSI letter stating both income and disability and show 3/4 (or 2/3rds) of their SSI income to be countable food stamp qualifying expenses in order to automatically qualify for the maximum Food Stamp benefits (The SSI Administration can and does, upon request, provide a letter that not only states the amount of SSI payment, but that the recipient receives the SSI for a disability. This is the letter that is used for applying for Homestead Protection.)

In City Council May 13, 2002.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of eight members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "D. Margaret Drury".

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

R-775

ORDER #7

Urging the Cambridge delegation to the Massachusetts Legislature to file a bill, that would enable SSI recipients to automatically qualify for maximum food stamp benefits when their food stamp "countable expenses" reach $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{2}{3}$ of their SSI income.

Councillor Decker

In City Council May 13, 2002

ORDER ADOPTED.