

George J. Wall

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Re : H.B. 2712

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of H.B. 2712. I primarily represent applicants for Social Security Disability and SSI benefits, and at least two thirds of my clients are subsisting on \$200 per month in food stamps and, for those who are lucky enough to have housing, subsidized housing. My clients resort to begging or selling cans and bottles for cash to purchase non-food essentials such as toilet paper, soap, shampoo, and toothpaste.

I gain Social Security benefits for about 70% of my clients who manage to live through the two-plus years that it takes to navigate the Social Security gauntlet. Typically my clients are in tears from the thought of finally being able to buy their own clothes and personal necessities from their benefits.

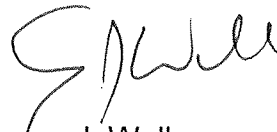
My clients who live in Washington, which still has a General Assistance program, are generally healthier and less anxious. Even a small stipend of \$320.00 per month and the accompanying medical benefits allows for better medical care and more peace of mind.

Individuals receiving public housing assistance pay 30% of income for rent. GA recipients who could pay rent would free up Housing Authority money to be spent on others. With General Assistance would come Medicaid, and I would expect that recipients with Medicaid would be able to get their health needs met, and reduce the number of uninsured people who utilize expensive emergency rooms for medical care. Free clinics would receive Medicaid reimbursement for health care, and allow more uninsured to be treated.

If this program were to be reinstated, the gain for the state would be in the economic benefit of that money being spent, for housing, for food, or for other consumable goods.

The population served by this benefit usually have both physical and mental health problems, and rarely any family contact or support. Reinstatement of General Assistance would improve the quality of life of the neediest among us.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Wall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

George J. Wall
Attorney at Law

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