

S.2089 - Supplemental Security Income Restoration Act of 2014

113th Congress (2013-2014)

BILL

Sponsor: [Sen. Brown, Sherrod \[D-OH\]](#) (Introduced 03/06/2014)
Committees: Senate - Finance
Latest Action: 03/06/2014 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Tracker:

Introduced Passed Senate Passed House To President Became Law

Subject — Policy Area:
 Social Welfare
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Summary (1)

Text (1)

Actions (2)

Titles (2)

Amendments (0)

Cosponsors (2)

Committees (1)

Related Bills (1)

Summary: S.2089 — 113th Congress (2013-2014)

[All Bill Information](#) (Except Text)

There is one summary for this bill. [Bill summaries](#) are authored by [CRS](#).

Shown Here:

Introduced in Senate (03/06/2014)

Supplemental Security Income Restoration Act of 2014 - Amends title XVI (Supplemental Security Income) (SSI) of the Social Security Act to increase from \$240 to \$1,320 (increased for inflation each calendar year after 2015) the first amount of general income per year excluded in determining SSI program eligibility.

Increases from: (1) \$780 to \$4,284 (similarly increased) the first amount of earned income similarly excluded (including for a blind or disabled individual [or spouse] under age (2) \$3,000 to \$15,000 in calendar year 2015 (increased for inflation) the resource limit for couples, and (3) \$2,000 to \$10,000 in calendar year 2015 (similarly increased) for individuals without a spouse.

Prescribes an inflation adjustment in benefits in any calendar year after 2015.

Removes support and maintenance furnished in kind from determination of unearned income.

Repeals the administrative penalty that renders individuals (and spouses) ineligible for SSI for a certain period of time if after the look-back date (usually 36 months preceding application for SSI) they dispose of their resources for less than market value.

SUBMITTED BY:

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***REQUEST FOR A LETTER TO BE TRANSMITTED TO NEW MEXICO
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS BY THE LEGISLATIVE DISABILITY CONCERNS
SUBCOMMITTEE REQUESTING CONGRESS TO REMOVE THE PENALTY
ASSOCIATED WITH BEING A MARRIED INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY
RECEIVING SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) BENEFITS***

DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT DRAFT

Dear _____,

Individuals with disabilities have the same needs as people without disabilities to develop and maintain permanent loving relationships and want to marry and live as full members of their communities. Individuals with disabilities often depend on supplemental security income (SSI) from federal social security along with other governmental benefits for meeting their basic living requirements.

Of the three major public income assistance programs (temporary assistance for needy families (TANF), supplemental nutritional assistance program (SNAP) and SSI) SSI is the only one to use marital status to reduce the amount of an individual's benefit; therefore a person with disabilities is penalized for marrying.

Effective January 1, 2014, an unmarried individual who qualifies for SSI receives \$721 per month in benefits. In addition, social security places strict limits on the amount of resources (\$2,000 in any given month) that individuals with disabilities are allowed to hold. When two individuals with disabilities who are both receiving SSI get married (or in some cases cohabitate with a member of the opposite sex, hold money in the same bank account or other factors which the Social Security Administration (SSA) uses to recognize a couple as being married), social security laws require that their SSI benefits be reduced by 24.9% (a reduction of \$361 per month, thereby diminishing the couple's joint benefit to \$1,082 per month instead of \$1,442 per month--

representing an annual loss of \$4,332). In addition, the limitation of resources allowed to be held by the couple is diminished by another 24.9% (from \$4,000 to \$3,000). Such laws not only penalize the couple, but also enforces that they will continue to live further below the poverty line than they already do. If only one person in the marriage is disabled and receives SSI benefits the penalty still applies and the individual may even lose their benefits altogether depending on the couple's income and assets.

During the 113th Congress, 2nd Session Senate Bill S.2089 (which has been endorsed by more than 50 organizations across many states) was introduced by Senators Sherrod Brown and Elizabeth Warren to amend title XVI of the Social Security Act to update eligibility for SSI and for other purposes. S.2089 was heard twice in the Senate and referred to Senate Finance on March 6, 2014. A good part of S.2089 recognizes that SSI has not been updated since 1972 and includes a section increasing allowable resources from \$2,000 to \$10,000 per individual, yet still includes a penalty for couples recognized as being married in the eyes of social security by reducing the allowable resource for a couple down to \$15,000 instead of the full \$20,000, again exercising the 24.9% marriage penalty.

We, the undersigned, respectfully request that our New Mexico members of Congress work toward taking action, and encourage others to join with them, to remove these unnecessary barriers to marriage from people with disabilities and others who rely on SSI. We should no longer allow such an unreasonable penalty to exist and we must no longer reflect or perpetuate outdated views that individuals with disabilities are not expected to fully participate as equal members of their communities; that individuals with disabilities are not perceived as capable of developing loving relationships with others; and that individuals with disabilities have the same need as people without disabilities to develop and maintain permanent loving relationships with others.

Respectfully yours,

***NOTE:** Resources for facts contained within this draft
are available from Ms. Martinez by request.*