Trump Considering Drug Testing Plan For Food Stamp Recipients

The Trump administration is considering allowing states to require drug testing for some food stamp recipients. The plan would narrowly target and affect mostly "able-bodied" people, according to an anonymous administration official, AP reports. The rule would apply to around five percent of those enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), according to AP's source. In addition, the plan would target people without dependents who are seeking certain specialized jobs, the AP reported.

Conservatives have been pushing for mandatory drug testing for people who receive SNAP benefits for years. Federal law prevents states from implementing their own conditions for individuals to be eligible for SNAP.

Secretary Sonny Perdue wants to provide states with "greater control over SNAP."

> *As a former governor, I know first-hand how important it is for states to be given flexibility to achieve the desired goal of self-sufficiency for people. We want to provide the nutrition people need, but we also want to help them transition from government programs, back to work, and into lives of independence."*

On Tuesday, Trump signed an executive order calling for federal agencies to establish expand on existing work requirements for individuals on federal welfare programs.

Ed Bolen, the senior policy analyst at the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities think tank thinks implementing drug

testing for SNAP recipients is legally murky.

> *Are people losing their food assistance if they don't take the test, and in that case, is that a condition of eligibility, which the states aren't allowed to impose? And does drug testing fall into what's allowable under a state training and employment program, which typically lists things like job search or education or on-the-job experience? This is kind of a different bucket."*

Utah did its own welfare drug testing on 4,730 applicants from Aug 2012 to July 2013 for their Temporary Assistance For Needy Families program. Less than one percent were found to be using illegal drugs.