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Evergreen State College  
MPA Program Admissions  
Policy Memo: SSI Resource Cap of \$2,000

**Problem Definition:** At present, becoming eligible and maintaining eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a monthly payment for disabled individuals, requires an individual to have less than \$2,000 in resources or \$3,000 for married couples (Raderman, 2022). As a result, recipients on the program are discouraged from accumulating substantial reserves, obtaining employment, or continuing to work. Due to the strict limitations, SSI recipients are kept in dependence on others for assistance with large expenses. The current asset limit does not keep pace with inflation as it has been fixed in law since 1989 (Delaney, 2022).

**Policy Evaluation:** The intention of resource limits was to prevent those with sufficient means from becoming eligible, as well as current recipients from accumulating excessive savings. Current policy considers resources to be cash, bank accounts, stocks, land, life insurance, personal property, vehicles, and anything else that can be deemed of monetary value (Social Security Administration). However, as a result of inflation and lack of adjustment to the limit overtime, the value of resources permitted to save is less than half of what was permitted in 1989, which would be \$5,000 adjusted for inflation (Delaney, 2022).

**Policy Recommendation:** In seeking to address this issue, the bipartisan SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act was introduced in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress by U.S. Senators Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio). The legislation would have raised the individual resource limits to \$10,000 and \$20,000 for married couples (Raderman, 2022). In raising the limits by 500%, SSI beneficiaries would be permitted to establish sufficient reserves for unexpected expenses reducing dependence on family and others. In addition, raising the resource limit could encourage those on SSI to obtain employment by reducing fear of quickly phasing out one's eligibility.

## References

Delaney, Arthur. (2022, Dec 21). Congress Won't Lift Ban On Savings For People On Disability.

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