

# Example of welfare time restrictions argumentative essay

[Economics](#), [Money](#)



The allocation of tax dollars is an ever-present debate among Americans, both in and out of legislative positions; one priority in particular is the issue of welfare. In the modern political narrative, there is a perception that 'welfare queens,' those who have the ability or capacity to work but simply accept welfare instead, are a drain on the system. To that end, there has been discussion of potential alternatives and stopgap measures to the system, such as limiting the amount of time people can be on welfare. However, despite the good intentions of such a measure, the imposing of time limits on welfare would not solve any systemic poverty problems, and are simply a means to try to solve a 'welfare queen' problem that simply does not exist.

The chief argument for imposing a time limit on welfare recipients is that, if people get used to having free money from the government, they will simply want to stay on welfare. The overall goal of time limits is to curb the amount of time people can legally be on welfare, thus encouraging them to get into a position where they do not need it (e. g. getting a job). However, this does not deal with pervasive social problems, and has its own set of issues. First of all, it would be extremely difficult to determine the appropriate length of time; different people are on welfare for different reasons, and existing welfare reforms have not shown a great deal of progress in eliminating welfare or improving conditions as compared to others (Bloom, Farrell and Fink, 2002). To that end, welfare should not be limited by strict time limits, as it is virtually impossible to place a universal standard for how long someone should be on welfare.

One of the major reasons this issue gets so much attention is the notion that

welfare money is being wasted on people who do not want to need it, and require added incentive to actually get off welfare money. These individuals are often dubbed 'welfare queens', and have become a popular bogeyman with which to politicize the issue. The source for this kind of characterization of welfare recipients is partly cultural; there is a pervading wisdom in America, particularly among those who have not had much exposure to lower-class Americans, that welfare recipients have something wrong with them. Many attribute being poor to a number of factors, mostly dealing with a failure for that person to take advantage of opportunities, get the right schooling, not being intelligent or ambitious enough, etc. This does a grave disservice to those who desperately need welfare, regardless of socioeconomic status - many are new to welfare given the recent recession, but are given this additional indignity that deters them from receiving assistance (Sulzberger, 2011).

All of these factors lead to the conclusion that their lower-class status is a failure on their part, and therefore must be punished. There is a cultural image in particular of the drug-addicted minority, living in the inner city, leeching off the government dime and contributing nothing to society; this is what many have in mind when they use the term 'welfare queen' (Sulzberger, 2011). Furthermore, there is also a stigma against single mothers being on welfare and addicted to drugs - studies have indicated that they were "no more likely than the general population to be drug or alcohol dependent" (Danziger et al. 2).

Laziness has been found to be a relatively low barrier to leaving welfare, with other problems such as mental health issues, domestic violence, lack of

transportation and others being greater obstacles in an individual's ability to work. Many in the population of welfare recipients have more than one of these barriers to work against, making the chief focus on drug abuse somewhat erroneous and ineffective as a deterrent to wasting money on welfare recipients (3). With these sociocultural factors in mind, it is reasonable to see that granting legislation based on inaccurate and negative cultural stereotypes would be a mistake. To that end, it would be borderline cruel to impose time limits on welfare recipients who may not have the sociocultural cachet to uplift themselves in time.

Presuming the common goal is to create a welfare system that is effective and transparent, a time limit has still been shown to be a misguided idea. These kinds of programs perpetuate a false impression of welfare recipients as being drug abusers, layabouts, slackers and overall undesirable people. This kind of social stigma is much more harmful to the progress and potential uplifting of low-income Americans than the practically nonexistent threat of drug abuse; to that end, drug testing of welfare recipients should not be implemented. If there were to be a kind of time limit for welfare recipients, it would need to be proportional in price to its effectiveness. Furthermore, valuable social programs would have to be put in place to get individuals off welfare, instead of simply imposing sanctions and denying those who require help the assistance they need.

## **References**

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