

SUBJECT: Requiring adjustment for inflation for vehicle resource limit under SNAP

COMMITTEE: Human Services — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Frank, Hinojosa, Klick, Meza, Neave, Noble, Rose

2 nays — Hull, Shaheen

WITNESSES: For — Celia Cole, Feeding Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Beth Corbett, Central Texas Food Bank; Dennis Borel, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities; Daniel Collins, El Paso County; Stacey Pogue, Every Texan; Judith McGeary, Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.; Joshua Houston, Texas Impact; Clayton Travis, Texas Pediatric Society; Julie Wheeler, Travis County Commissioners Court; Ashley Harris, United Ways of Texas; Susana Carranza; Dorothy Ann Compton)

Against — None

On — Hilary Davis, Health and Human Services Commission; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Valerie Hawthorne, North Texas Food Bank)

BACKGROUND: Under Human Resources Code ch. 33, the Health and Human Services Commission operates the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), which establishes certain income and resource limits for an applicant's eligibility for SNAP benefits.

In Texas, certain vehicles are exempt from the SNAP resource limits as follows:

- up to \$15,000 of the fair market value for the primary vehicle or highest valued countable vehicle; and
- up to \$4,650 of the fair market value for other vehicles used by household members.

A vehicle's value in excess of the amounts above is not exempt and is counted toward the value of an applicant's household resources.

Some have suggested that the state's vehicle resource limits under SNAP are outdated and no longer cover the cost of a reliable vehicle and that the vehicle asset limits should be updated.

**DIGEST:**

CSHB 2641 would require the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission by rule to adjust for inflation the maximum amount of a motor vehicle's fair market value that could be excluded from an applicant's household resources for determining eligibility for the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) benefits.

By October 1 of each year, the maximum amount of the fair market value of a motor vehicle that could be excluded from an applicant's resources would have to be increased or decreased to reflect the percentage difference between:

- the average index level set by the Bureau of Labor Statistics; and
- the new vehicles index of the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics or its successor index during the most recent 12-month period ending in June.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021, and would apply to an initial determination or recertification of eligibility of a person for SNAP that was made on or after the bill's effective date.