

SUBJECT: Simplifying SNAP requirements for certain recipients

COMMITTEE: Human Services — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Frank, Hinojosa, Meza, Neave, Rose

4 nays — Hull, Klick, Noble, Shaheen

WITNESSES: For — Jamie Olson, Feeding Texas; Valerie Hawthorne, North Texas Food Bank; Jennifer Allen, Revolution Foods; Vance Ginn, Texas Public Policy Foundation; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Dana Harris, Austin Chamber of Commerce; Beth Corbett, Central Texas Food Bank; Jason Sabo, Children at Risk; Maggie Stern, Children's Defense Fund - Texas; Claudia Russell, City of San Marcos; Christine Bryan, Clarity Child Guidance Center; Adam Haynes, Conference of Urban Counties; Daniel Collins, El Paso County; Stacey Pogue, Every Texan; Ender Reed, Harris County Commissioners Court; James Lee, Legacy Community Health; Kate Goodrich, Meals on Wheels; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.; Ana O'Quin, National Alliance on Mental Illness Texas; Alison Mohr Boleware, National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter; Joel Romo, Partnership for a Healthy Texas; Kate Murphy, Texans Care for Children; Lisa Hughes, Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; Shannon Jaquette, Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops; Joshua Houston, Texas Impact; Adrienne Trigg, Texas Medical Equipment Providers Association; Julie Wheeler, Travis County Commissioners Court; Ashley Harris, United Ways of Texas; Karlyn Keller; Graham Sweeney)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Hilary Davis, Health and Human Services Commission; Steve Johnson, HHSC Office of Inspector General)

BACKGROUND: Some have noted that the process for obtaining benefits through the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) can be time-consuming, particularly for the elderly and people with disabilities, and

suggest that simplifying the certification and recertification requirements could aid these populations.

DIGEST:

HB 701 would require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to develop and implement simplified certification and recertification requirements for supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) benefits for an individual who:

- was 60 years of age or older or was a person with a disability, as determined by commission rule; and
- resided in a household in which every individual residing in the household was 60 years of age or older or was a person with a disability, as determined by commission rule.

The simplified requirements would have to:

- allow an individual described by the bill to waive recertification interview requirements;
- simplify and reduce the number of verification requirements for certifying and recertifying eligibility to receive benefits, which would have to include the use of a shortened application form; and
- allow the individual to remain eligible for benefits for 36 months after certification and after each recertification.

An individual described by the bill would be required to submit to the commission a change reporting form every 12 months during the 36-month eligibility period and report to the commission, in accordance with federal law, when the individual received an increase in income.

The commission would be required, in a manner that complied with federal law, to use data matching to help enroll in SNAP eligible individuals who were receiving Medicare benefits. HHSC could seek or use private funding to contract with a public or private entity to carry out this requirement.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021, and would apply only to an

application or recertification of eligibility of a person for SNAP benefits  
submitted on or after January 1, 2022.