By: King of Taylor, Naishtat

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A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

| 1 | AN ACT |
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| 2 | relating to the operation and efficiency of the eligibility |
| 3 | determination process for supplemental nutrition assistance |
| 4 | program benefits. |
| 5 | BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS: |
| 6 | SECTION 1. Chapter 33, Human Resources Code, is amended by |
| 7 | designating Sections 33.0005 through 33.028 as Subchapter A and |
| 8 | adding a subchapter heading to read as follows: |
| 9 | SUBCHAPTER A. NUTRITIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN GENERAL |
| 10 | SECTION 2. Chapter 33, Human Resources Code, is amended by |
| 11 | adding Subchapter B to read as follows: |
| 12 | SUBCHAPTER B. SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: |
| 13 | ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION PROCESS EFFICIENCY |
| 14 | Sec. 33.051. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter: |
| 15 | (1) "Commission" means the Health and Human Services |
| 16 | Commission. |
| 17 | (2) "Supplemental nutrition assistance program" means |
| 18 | the nutritional assistance program formerly referred to as the food |
| 19 | stamp program. |
| 20 | Sec. 33.052. APPLICATION ASSISTANCE. (a) The commission |
| 21 | shall develop procedures to ensure that: |
| 22 | <u>(1) clear guidance on program eligibility</u> |
| 23 | requirements is provided to supplemental nutrition assistance |
| 24 | applicants and prospective applicants and mechanisms are |

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| 1 | established, including Internet and e-mail mechanisms, as |
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| 2 | appropriate, by which applicants can obtain answers to basic |
| 3 | program-related questions; and |
| 4 | (2) information is provided to each applicant in |
| 5 | person, by e-mail, by telephone, or through the mail, as |
| 6 | appropriate, about information the applicant is required to submit |
| 7 | for purposes of the eligibility determination process. |
| 8 | (b) The commission shall consider the feasibility and |
| 9 | cost-effectiveness of using office personnel or an automated system |
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10 or systems to support the eligibility determination process by 11 contacting an applicant in advance of an applicant's scheduled 12 interview to remind the applicant of the interview and the 13 documentation that must be presented at the interview.

Sec. 33.053. USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO PROMOTE EFFICIENCY AND 14 15 FRAUD DETECTION. (a) The commission shall consider the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of using readily available 16 17 document scanning technology to reduce storage and maintenance costs and potential loss of data by creating electronic case files 18 19 for supplemental nutrition assistance cases instead of maintaining physical files for those cases. The commission shall use that 20 technology if determined feasible and cost-effective. 21

(b) The commission shall implement, if feasible and cost-effective, a risk scoring program for supplemental nutrition assistance applications to streamline the eligibility determination process, reduce errors, and strengthen fraud detection. A risk scoring program implemented by the commission must be capable of ranking applications based on complexity so

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| 3 members can be used to process more difficult cases and cases with 4 fraud characteristics; and 5 (2) applications ranked as low-risk on fra- characteristics can be processed more expeditiously. 7 Sec. 33.054. WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT. The commission shath 8 improve its management of supplemental nutrition assistant 9 eligibility determination staff by: 10 (1) establishing clear performance expectations the 11 can serve as the basis for performance assessments; 12 (2) planning for anticipated staffing needs; 13 (3) revising policies regarding overtime and accrust 14 of compensatory time to ensure that eligibility determination staff 15 members have access to supervisors as necessary; 16 (4) assessing the effectiveness of training provided to new eligibility determination staff members; and 18 (5) evaluating the compensation of eligibility 19 determination staff members. 20 Sec. 33.055. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT INFORMATION. (a) To commission, in conjunction with state, regional, and loc eligibility determination offices, shall identify eligibility 21 determination program performance indicators with respect to white data should periodically be collected. The commission shate <th>1</th> <th>that:</th> | 1 | that: |
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1 performance indicators.

2 (b) The commission shall provide periodic management reports generated by the automated eligibility system to 3 eligibility determination offices. The reports must include 4 information regarding the number of pending supplemental nutrition 5 assistance applications and the number of those applications that 6 7 have not been processed within applicable timeliness standards. (c) The commission shall use data collected under 8 Subsection (a) and the reports described by Subsection (b) to 9 10 develop and assess strategies for: (1) streamlining the supplemental nutrition 11 12 assistance eligibility determination process; (2) improving timeliness of eligibility 13 14 determinations; and 15 (3) accommodating increases in applications received. 16 SECTION 3. To the extent available for this purpose, the 17 Health and Human Services Commission shall use supplemental federal funding provided for the administration of the supplemental 18 19 nutrition assistance program to implement Subchapter B, Chapter 33, Human Resources Code, as added by this Act. 20 21 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2011.

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