

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 751
By: Raymond
Human Services
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties note that obesity rates in the United States have nearly tripled over the past three decades. Such parties also note that, according to nutritional standards, sweetened beverages such as soft drinks, energy drinks, sweet teas, and sports drinks offer little, if any, nutritional value and contain large quantities of added sugars; that fatty foods have been linked to incidents of obesity, diabetes, and heart-related health issues; and that studies show that high fructose corn syrup and trans fat are particularly unhealthy food items. In light of these reports, there has been some concern regarding the extent to which the state may be supporting the consumption of such items through its aid programs. H.B. 751 seeks to address this issue by prohibiting the use of certain state aid for the purchase of unhealthy food items.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 751 amends the Human Resources Code to prohibit a recipient of benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program from using those benefits to purchase a sweetened beverage, candy ordinarily packaged and sold for consumption without further preparation, potato or corn chips ordinarily packaged and sold for consumption without further preparation, or cookies ordinarily packaged and sold for consumption without further preparation. The bill exempts the purchase of the following products from the prohibition: a milk product or a product containing milk or a milk protein; a milk substitute, including soy milk, rice milk, or almond milk; a beverage in which the only added sweetener does not add calories to the beverage; a beverage intended by the manufacturer for consumption by an infant that is commonly referred to as "infant formula"; a beverage intended by the manufacturer for use for weight reduction; a fruit or vegetable juice to which no sugar has been added; a beverage or other product intended for use as recommended by a health care professional; a beverage or other product that contains plant protein sources; or a product that is fortified with a vitamin or mineral and contains a source of protein.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2013.