

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1267
By: Thompson, Senfronia
Human Services
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) is a federal program, administered by each state, that provides assistance to qualifying recipients so they can buy food while participating in employment and training programs. Federal funds cover nearly all of the costs associated with the program and federal law states that a person convicted of a felony drug offense is not eligible for SNAP benefits. However, a state is authorized to pass legislation extending eligibility to these individuals.

Interested parties assert that Texas remains among a handful of states that have not passed such legislation, and further assert that these programs are an important part of the overall strategy to promote employment stability among individuals with a past felony conviction. The parties explain that many local employment and training programs refer participants to specialized programs aimed at providing quick and intensive vocational training to speed the path toward financial stability and that SNAP food benefits provide some degree of stability to the individual's family while the participant completes employment and training programs. The parties contend that Texas' lack of action on SNAP eligibility removes an important tool to promote successful reintegration for persons convicted of a drug-related offense. H.B. 1267 seeks to address this issue.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

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. 1267 amends the Human Resources Code to limit the applicability of federal law denying supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) benefits to a person convicted of a felony offense that has as an element the possession, use, or distribution of a controlled substance in determining a person's SNAP eligibility to a two-year period beginning on the date the person is convicted of such a felony offense.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.