

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1138
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Health & Human Services
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 1138 is about helping the state better understand how it is utilizing taxpayer money for safety net programs as well as identifying areas to improve outcomes for beneficiaries. In other words, how can we use scarce taxpayer dollars on these safety net programs more efficiently so the dollars go to those the program intends to help, while improving outcomes to support a path for enrollees to achieve permanent self-sufficiency off these programs.

Currently, there is no diligent process when it comes to understanding and streamlining safety net programs. S.B. 1138 would provide this information by way of a study of safety net programs, such as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Medicaid, and others. This study would help to gain valuable insights on these programs to evaluate how to streamline them to help reduce costs, increase efficiency, and determine whether the dollars are reaching the appropriate people the program intended so that enrollees are on the right path toward achieving permanent self-sufficiency.

The study would research the amount of taxpayer revenue spent, state money appropriated, and federal money received per program. Vigorous statistical analysis shall be made to ensure that the programs goals are being met by measuring key variables for specific demographic and socioeconomic statuses of recipients. These variables include the percentage of money appropriated on providing benefits to recipients, the number of individuals who begin but do not complete a welfare application, and a cost benefit analysis to measure the effectiveness of these programs in helping individuals reach permanent self-sufficiency, along with many more.

S.B. 1138 will help create new recommendations of how safety net programs can be simplified and streamlined to improve outcomes and lower costs to taxpayers.

As proposed, S.B. 1138 amends current law relating to a study on streamlining public safety net programs to reduce costs and improve outcomes for recipients under the programs.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS. Defines "board" and "safety net program."

SECTION 2. STUDY OF SAFETY NET PROGRAMS. (a) Requires LBB, in coordination with the Health and Human Services Commission and other applicable agencies, to conduct a study on safety net programs available in this state for the purposes of:

- (1) streamlining program eligibility requirements, resources, and benefits;
- (2) improving outcomes for recipients under the programs; and
- (3) reducing costs to taxpayers.

(b) Requires that the study include:

(1) an examination of:

(A) the total amount of taxpayer revenue spent per safety net program, state money appropriated per program, and federal money received per program;

(B) benefits provided under each program;

(C) the number of recipients enrolled or otherwise receiving benefits under each program;

(D) aggregate demographic and socioeconomic information on recipients under each program including information relating to:

(i) the average household income of recipients under each program;

(ii) the employment status of recipients or, if recipients are dependents, the parents or guardian of recipients, under each program;

(iii) the marital status of recipients or, if recipients are dependents, the parents or guardian of recipients, under each program; and

(iv) the average number of dependents in recipient households under each program;

(E) duplicative services and administrative activities among programs;

(F) the percentage of state money appropriated to each program that is directly spent on providing benefits to recipients under the program and the percentage that is spent on staff and other administrative costs;

(G) the percentage of recipients who become ineligible for each program because the recipient no longer meets the income eligibility requirements;

(H) the number of individuals who begin, but do not complete, an application for benefits under each program and a statement of that number as a percentage of the overall number recipients under each program;

(I) the rate at which former recipients of each program later reapply for benefits under the program; and

(J) the average length of time between an initial application for benefits and approval under each program;

(2) a cost-benefit analysis that compares the costs of providing each program with the program's effectiveness at transitioning recipients to self-sufficiency; and

(3) a statistical analysis of the data collected under Subdivisions (1) and (2).

(c) Requires that LBB conduct the study and prepare the report required by Section 3 of this Act using existing resources.

SECTION 3. REPORT ON SAFETY NET PROGRAMS. Requires that LBB, not later than September 1, 2022:

(1) submit a report on the LBB's findings and recommendations to the legislature, including recommendations on how to simplify and streamline each safety net program, improve outcomes of each program, and lower costs to taxpayers for safety net programs; and

(2) post the report on the LBB's Internet website.

SECTION 4. EXPIRATION. Provides that this Act expires January 1, 2023.

SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.