

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
87R3752 MM-D

S.B. 1914
By: Blanco
Health & Human Services
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Under federal law, households must meet certain income and resource limits to be eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) gives states the option of determining how vehicles count toward household resources. Current Texas law allows a maximum value of only \$15,000 for the first vehicle and \$4,650 for the second or any additional vehicles to qualify for SNAP benefits.

Current Texas vehicle value policy disqualifies many households from accessing SNAP—especially families with two working parents who depend on two reliable vehicles to find and maintain employment. In order to get the help they need to temporarily feed their families, the current policy requires individuals to spend down their savings or sell their vehicle to qualify for SNAP. Additionally, the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic left millions of Texans struggling to pay their bills and feed their families. Many people lost their jobs and thousands of families were unable to access SNAP because they owned cars above the vehicle asset limits.

S.B. 1914 excludes the value of a vehicle owned by an applicant or a member of the applicant's household from the asset limit used in determining eligibility for SNAP benefits.

As proposed, S.B. 1914 amends current law relating to excluding the value of motor vehicles in determining eligibility for the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

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. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 33, Human Resources Code, by adding Section 33.021, as follows:

Sec. 33.021. EXCLUDING VALUE OF MOTOR VEHICLES IN DETERMINING SNAP ELIGIBILITY. Prohibits the Health and Human Services Commission, in determining the eligibility of an applicant for or recertifying the eligibility of a recipient of supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits, from considering as resources the value of a motor vehicle in which the applicant or recipient or a member of the applicant's or recipient's household has an ownership interest.

SECTION 2. Provides that the change in law made by this Act applies to an initial determination or recertification of eligibility of a person for the supplemental nutrition assistance program under Chapter 33, Human Resources Code, that is made on or after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 3. Requires a state agency, if necessary for implementation of a provision of this Act, to request a waiver or authorization from a federal agency, and authorizes a delay of implementation until such a waiver or authorization is granted.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2021.