

By: West

S.B. No. 557

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the eligibility of certain students enrolled in a postsecondary educational institution for the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 33, Human Resources Code, is amended by adding Section 33.020 to read as follows:

Sec. 33.020. SNAP ELIGIBILITY OF CERTAIN STUDENTS ENROLLED IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS. (a) In this section, "postsecondary educational institution" includes:

(1) an institution of higher education or a private or independent institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code; and

(2) a career school or college as defined by Section 132.001, Education Code.

(b) The executive commissioner shall adopt rules consistent with federal law to provide supplemental nutrition assistance benefits to students enrolled in a postsecondary educational institution. The rules must:

(1) identify the types of postsecondary degrees or programs in which a student must be enrolled to qualify for supplemental nutrition assistance benefits, including participation in any work placement or unpaid internship associated with a postsecondary educational institution; and

1 (2) ensure a student remains eligible for supplemental
2 nutrition assistance benefits during a break in the semester or
3 academic term of the postsecondary educational institution in which
4 the student is enrolled.

5 (c) The executive commissioner shall establish a work group
6 to provide input for the adoption of rules under Subsection (b). In
7 adopting the rules, the executive commissioner shall consider the
8 work group's input.

9 (d) The work group is composed of at least 9 but not more
10 than 13 members who are representatives of postsecondary
11 educational institutions or nonprofit organizations that serve
12 low-income individuals. The executive commissioner shall ensure
13 members of the work group represent various types of postsecondary
14 educational institutions located throughout this state. The
15 executive commissioner shall appoint one work group member to serve
16 as presiding officer.

17 (e) The work group is automatically abolished on the
18 adoption of rules under Subsection (b).

19 (f) Subsections (c), (d), and (e) and this subsection expire
20 September 1, 2025.

21 SECTION 2. (a) Not later than December 31, 2023, the
22 executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission
23 shall establish the work group required by Section 33.020, Human
24 Resources Code, as added by this Act.

25 (b) Not later than December 31, 2024, the executive
26 commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission shall
27 adopt the rules required by Section 33.020, Human Resources Code,

1 as added by this Act.

2 SECTION 3. If before implementing any provision of this Act
3 a state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a
4 federal agency is necessary for implementation of that provision,
5 the agency affected by the provision shall request the waiver or
6 authorization and may delay implementing that provision until the
7 waiver or authorization is granted.

8 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.