

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESB 6411

C 54 L 04

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Reducing hunger.

Sponsors: Senators Brandland, Rasmussen, Sheahan, Hargrove, Swecker, Brown, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Regala, Eide, Kline, Kohl-Welles and Winsley.

Senate Committee on Children & Family Services & Corrections

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background: Food insecurity describes a household where finances are short enough that the household members are not sure that no household members will go hungry. Food insecurity with hunger describes households in which the finances are such that at least one family member does go hungry at times because there is not enough money for food.

According to the USDA *Household Food Security* report, which measures food insecurity and food insecurity with hunger, Washington State is the fifth most "hungry" state and 14th in food insecurity. The states in the top four are Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, Mississippi, and Arizona is tied with Washington for fifth place. Washington has been in the top five states for hunger since the federal government began tracking the information in 1996. Washington's rate of hunger has dropped from a high of 5 percent in 2000 to 4.4 percent in 2002 but all Washington rates are at least above the national average. While Washington's food insecurity ranking is lower, approximately 40 percent of Washington food insecure families are also hungry. This compares to a 30 percent national average and a 32 percent average for the western states.

Washington has a food stamp program that provides a valuable source of food for qualifying food insecure families.

Some persons do not qualify for food stamps because of a post 1996 felony drug conviction. This ban does not apply to other felonies. Federal law now provides states the opportunity for states to lift the lifetime ban on food stamp eligibility for persons with felony drug convictions.

Summary: School districts with schools serving grades kindergarten through four where 25 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced price lunches must implement a school lunch program. Applications must be sent to the families to determine whether 25 percent of the students qualify. School lunch programs implemented under this section must be implemented for the 2005-2006 school year.

School districts that have schools with summer academic, enrichment, or remedial programs where 50 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced price lunches must implement a summer food service program that is open to area children unless there is a compelling reason not to open the program. For schools with existing school lunch programs, summer food

service programs must be implemented in summer 2005; for other schools, they must be implemented the summer following the implementation of a school lunch program.

There is a good cause exception to both school food service provisions.

To the maximum extent allowable under federal law, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must implement simplified reporting for food stamps before November 1, 2004. DSHS must also provide, beginning on October 31, 2005, transitional food stamp assistance for a period of five months following the cessation of TANF assistance so long as the family is not on sanction status. If necessary, DSHS must extend the household's food stamp certification until the end of the transition period. With this bill, the state also exercises the federal option for states to opt out of the drug felony eligibility ban.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	44	0
House	77	18

Effective: June 10, 2004