

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5785

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation, January 25, 2022
Ways & Means, February 7, 2022

Title: An act relating to transitional food assistance.

Brief Description: Concerning transitional food assistance.

Sponsors: Senators Lovelett, Wilson, C., Das, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Nobles, Saldaña and Stanford; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation: 1/20/22, 1/25/22 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/04/22, 2/07/22 [DPS (HSRR)].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Directs the Department of Social and Health Services to provide transitional food assistance for five months to a household that ceases to receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and is not in full-family sanction status.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, REENTRY & REHABILITATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5785 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wilson, C., Chair; Nguyen, Vice Chair; Gildon, Ranking Member; Dozier, McCune, Saldaña and Trudeau.

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7488)

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5785 as recommended by Committee on Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rolfes, Chair; Frockt, Vice Chair, Capital; Robinson, Vice Chair, Operating & Revenue; Wilson, L., Ranking Member; Brown, Assistant Ranking Member, Operating; Schoesler, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Honeyford, Ranking Minority Member, Capital; Billig, Braun, Carlyle, Conway, Dhingra, Gildon, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Mullet, Muzzall, Pedersen, Rivers, Van De Wege, Wagoner, Warnick and Wellman.

Staff: Joshua Hinman (786-7281)

Background: The Basic Food Program is Washington's name for the combination of federally-funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the state-funded Food Assistance Program for Legal Immigrants (FAP). FAP is for individuals who are legal immigrants and meet all eligibility requirements for SNAP except for citizenship and immigration status. Basic Food helps low-income individuals and families access nutritious foods.

The Transitional Food Assistance (TFA) program began in 2005. A household that ceases to receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Tribal TANF receives TFA for five months provided the household is not in sanction status. If necessary, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is to extend the household's basic food certification until the end of the certification period.

In fiscal year 2021, an average of 11,180 households received TFA.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): DSHS is to provide transitional food assistance for five months to a household that ceases to receive TANF and is not in full-family sanction status.

If a member of a household has been sanctioned, but the household is still receiving benefits, then remaining eligible household members may receive transitional food assistance.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HUMAN SERVICES, REENTRY & REHABILITATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

The effective date of this Act is January 1, 2024.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2024.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation): *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: TFA is a safety net to help families transition off of public assistance. It's so easy to make \$0.01 too much and then just get cut off benefits which leaves families in a worse position. This bill makes sure we are feeding hungry kids. With the pandemic, families are struggling even more to meet their basic needs and families with kids are the most unstable. Federal law has changed and allows for transitional food provided the family is not in full-family sanction status however an amendment is needed to provide an effective date.

Persons Testifying (Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation): PRO: Senator Liz Lovelett, Prime Sponsor; Claire Lane, Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition; Babs Roberts, Department of Social and Health Services, Economic Services Administration.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation): No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on First Substitute (Ways & Means): PRO: Families leaving TANF face challenges to meet their basic needs. 27 percent of Washington low income families struggle with hunger during the pandemic.

Families with children, particularly of color, are most impacted by TANF reform. Last year the Legislature strengthened TFA and doing so again this year would align with permissible TFA uses under federal law, would align with TFA policy reform in the past, and would strengthen the TANF off-ramp. Washington needs to provide food security for vulnerable families.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Claire Lane, Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.