

HCS HB 796 -- NONMEDICAL PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

SPONSOR: Haefner

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 9 to 3. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on Social Services by a vote of 6 to 3.

This bill requires the Department of Social Services to allow the current federal waiver of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents to expire and prohibits the department from seeking an extension of the waiver. The prohibition must terminate January 1, 2019. Any ongoing savings resulting from a reduction in state expenditures due to the expiration of the waiver or changes to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program effective on August 28, 2015, and subject to appropriations, must be used to provide child care assistance for single parent households, education assistance, transportation assistance, and job training for individuals receiving benefits under the programs.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill makes changes to the SNAP Program by requiring able-bodied working adults without dependents to work to be eligible for the SNAP program, also commonly referred to as food stamps. Missouri currently has a waiver of this requirement, and the bill is prohibiting the department from obtaining the waiver in the future.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Haefner.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that the bill would tie the hands of the department in the event of future labor market changes and prevent the department from requesting waivers if things change in Missouri. The department is not required to seek waivers in the future, so why prohibit it and cause issues that the General Assembly will have to tackle in the future.

Testifying against the bill was Empower Missouri.