

HCS HB 217 -- NUTRITION ASSISTANCE

SPONSOR: Perkins

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 10 to 5. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 3.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 217.

This bill requires any individual participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to comply with the work requirements described in federal statute and regulations. Any nonexempt participant who refuses or fails without good cause to comply with the work requirements will be ineligible to participate in the program for the duration of the disqualification period as follows:

- (1) For the first occurrence of noncompliance, the individual will be disqualified for three months;
- (2) For the second occurrence of noncompliance, the individual will be disqualified for six months; and
- (3) For the third occurrence of noncompliance, the individual will be disqualified permanently.

Except in cases of permanent disqualification, an individual may resume participation in SNAP at the end of a disqualification period if the individual applies again and is in compliance with the work requirements. A disqualified individual may be permitted to resume participation during a disqualification period by becoming exempt from the work requirements.

An individual disqualified under these provisions shall be entitled to a fair hearing under applicable federal and state law.

Implementation of these provisions must be accomplished using existing resources.

This bill is the same as SB 138 (2021) and similar to HB 1486 (2018).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this bill helps get people back to work instead of relying on welfare, as long as they are able to work. Supporters also say similar legislation has worked in other states.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Perkins; Concerned Women For America; and the Opportunity Solutions Project.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that this bill punishes families, not just the individual who is not working. Children will suffer the most because the whole family divides the food, instead of the disqualified participant no longer receiving his or her share. This bill will increase dependency on food banks and charities who already do not have sufficient means to accommodate each person in need. Because SNAP is federally funded, this bill will cost the state money without any savings.

Testifying against the bill were Michelle Witthaus, Generate Health; Valerie Nicholson-Watson, Harvesters--The Community Food Network; Empower Missouri; Operation Food Search; American Heart Association; Nava Kantor; Amy Blansit; Amy Kup Hammerman, National Council of Jewish Women St. Louis; Kids Win Missouri; Dan Kent Deplois; Missouri Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics; Health Forward Foundation; Leah Moser; Patricia A. Hubbs; Ruth Ehresman, Vision for Children at Risk; Scott Baker, Feeding Missouri; Missouri Catholic Conference; Melissa Vatterott, Missouri Coalition For The Environment; Arnie C. Dienoff; Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence; Joyce Rogers; Laurie Brickey; Luke Barber; Feeding Missouri, National Association of Social Workers-Missouri Chapter; Missouri Budget Project; Empower Missouri; and Children's Trust Fund.

OTHERS: The Department of Social Services, provided written informational testimony.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.