

HB 285 Would Increase Hunger in Texas

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- HB 285 is shortsighted and would lead to higher rates of hunger by ending Texas' flexibility to target SNAP assistance to respond to disasters, local workforce conditions and to the needs of special groups like former foster care children.
- Texas has some of the most stringent SNAP rules in the country. To receive SNAP in Texas adults without children in the home must work at least 30 hours per week (federal law says 20 hours) or be looking for work through the SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program.
- Adults without children who are not able to work 30 hours a week are time limited and can only receive SNAP for up to **3 months every 3 years**.
- The feds, who pay 100% of SNAP benefits, allow states to waive the time limits in areas with very high unemployment where there are no jobs to be found. States are also given the flexibility to waive select groups of individuals if they chose. **HB 285 would ban the state from ever issuing a waiver of the SNAP time limits regardless of the circumstances.**
- One important group that Texas could be waiving from the SNAP time limits is former foster care children. Young people who age out of foster care very often struggle to find work or attend school and report high rates of hunger. Exempting them from the time limit would offer them some stability while they look for work. HB 285 would prevent the state from aiding former foster care children.
- The recently passed farm bill recognized that states need flexibility to waive SNAP time limits so they can respond to local conditions and emergencies. Texas has always been extremely conservative in the use of its waiver authority, but maintaining the states' flexibility to deal with future needs is critical. HB 285 would end that flexibility.
- HB 285 would tie the states hands and hurt struggling Texans in the future by stopping the state from waiving the SNAP time limit:
 - When a disaster like Hurricane Harvey devastates a community and stores and businesses are damaged and their workers suffer.
 - When a town's major employer shuts its doors and jobs are scarce.
 - When the next national recession hits and full-time employment is hard to find.
 - When a former foster care child struggles to finish school or to find work.