



EVERY TEXAN

Formerly Center for Public Policy Priorities

Every Texan **Opposes** HB 1886 by Noble

Relating to a study of streamlining welfare programs in Texas to reduce costs and improve outcomes for beneficiaries.

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Every Texan opposes HB 1886 by Noble as it misconstrues the fundamental purposes of the programs which it directs the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) to study. HB 1886 directs the LBB to study seven programs 1) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), 2) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); 3) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); 4) Medicaid; 5) Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP); 6) Child Care and Early Learning Services Program; and the 7) Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) programs. These programs provide support for basic needs to millions of Texan children each year. Currently, there are more than 4 million children receiving food and/or health care assistance from Medicaid, CHIP, SNAP and/or WIC. Every Texan opposes HB 1886, because it stigmatizes the use of these programs and misconstrues their purpose. With the exception of TANF, these programs do not provide direct cash assistance to families. TANF currently serves fewer than 38,000 Texans, of those, more than 30,000 are children. The primary purpose of these programs is to ensure that working low-income families with children have access to basic needs such as food, health care, a home with running water and electricity, and child care so parents can go to work.

All children deserve the opportunity for a healthy life. These programs help to ensure low-income children in Texas live in an environment where they can thrive. **Instead of allocating limited time and resources based on the inaccurate myth that these programs are inefficient and ineffective, the Texas legislature should be focused on improving the health, safety, and overall well-being of Texas children.**

- In Texas, one in five children experiences poverty. Parents are forced to choose between work and childcare, and many work without livable wages and benefits. **Policymakers should advance policies supporting quality jobs and economic opportunity for all to ensure every Texan has the opportunity to succeed.**
- Texas has one of the worst rates of child food insecurity in the nation. Of Texas households with children, one in five did not have enough to eat in the past week. **Policymakers should reduce barriers to enrolling in nutrition programs such as SNAP so every Texan can access the food they need to stay healthy.**
- Texas has the worst rate of child health insurance coverage in the nation with 12.7% of children without health insurance. **Policymakers should protect health and human services funding and remove enrollment barriers so every Texan can access the health care they need to thrive.**

By improving the reach and resources of these programs Texas could increase the number of children who have access to healthy food, health care, safe child care, and running water and electricity in their homes. Having adequate nutrition, health care, child care, and housing impacts how children grow, play, and learn. Investment in Texas' children is an investment in the future of the state.

Source: *Texas KIDS COUNT: Health Equity for Every Child* available at <https://everytexan.org/kids-count-2021/>