



## Every Texan **Supports** HB 1353 by Ortega

Relating to continued household eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits on the ineligibility of the head of household for failure to comply with certain work requirements.

Rachel Cooper, Senior Policy Analyst Every Texan, [cooper@everytexan.org](mailto:cooper@everytexan.org)

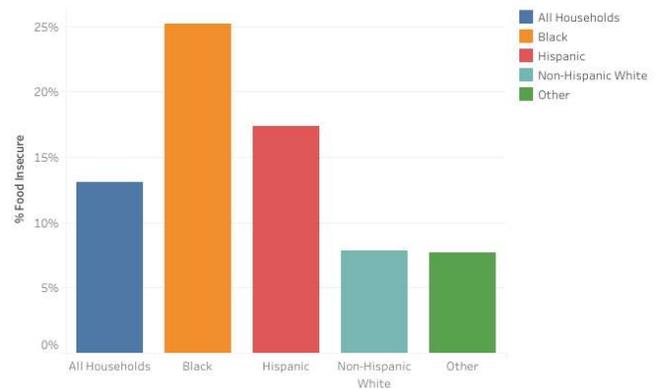
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Every Texan supports HB 1353 by Ortega as it will reduce child hunger in Texas by ending the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) full family sanction policy that punishes children when their parents are unable to prove how many hours they work.

Texas had one of the highest rates of child hunger in the country with 1.6 million children (22 percent) being food insecure. Food insecurity is a symptom of financial insecurity – families struggle to put food on the table when they work low-wage jobs with fluctuating hours and no benefits. Due to Texas' long and often brutal history of racial discrimination, Black and Hispanic Texans are disproportionately likely to work unstable low-wage jobs and be at risk of hunger. Compared to White families, Black families are three times more likely, and Hispanic families are twice as likely, to be food insecure in Texas.

% of Households in Texas Food Insecure, by Race/Ethnicity of Household Head

Source: FRAC Analysis of Current Population Survey, 2017-2019



Enrollment in SNAP is the best defense against hunger as it is designed to supplement food budgets and make it possible for low-income Texans to buy the food they need. Texas has some of the most stringent SNAP rules in the country. In addition to the income and asset restrictions, unless they are disabled or caring for a child under age 6, most parents in Texas must work or be looking for work through the SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program for at least 30 hours per week. If the head of household is unable to meet the 30 hour a week requirement, the entire family is sanctioned, and their SNAP case is closed. By choosing to enforce a full family sanction, Texas punishes the children of its lowest paid workers - many working in retail, food service and home health care – who often have little control over their schedules. Even in families with two working parents, if the highest earner fails to meet the 30 hour a week rule, Texas chooses to sanction the entire family. The family must wait until the end of the sanction period, which ranges from one to six months, to reapply or that parent must leave the household. Texas has created a policy that makes low-wage families chose between staying together or feeding their children.

HB 1353 will improve food insecurity for children in Texas by ending the full family sanction policy in SNAP. Instead if the head of household is unable to prove they worked 30 hours a week, the individual will be sanctioned but their dependent children will remain on SNAP. Texas would join 40 other states in realizing that taking food away from hungry children is a mistake.