



# EVERY TEXAN

Formerly Center for Public Policy Priorities

## Every Texan **Supports** HB 701 by Walle

Relating to simplified certification and recertification requirements for certain persons under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

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

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Every Texan supports HB 701 by Walle as it removes barriers to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for vulnerable senior citizens and the disabled which will reduce Texas' high rate of hunger by providing stable access to healthy food.

For many seniors, Texas is a hard place to grow old. Long before the pandemic, Texas had the fifth highest rate of senior hunger in America and the hardships have only increased. SNAP acts as a buffer against hunger for low-income seniors and people with disabilities by supplementing food budgets and making it possible to buy the food they need. SNAP benefits can be used only on food items like fruits and vegetables, flour, meat, fish and dairy products at supermarkets, grocery stores, convenience stores and farmers' markets. By improving food security, SNAP leads to better nutrition, improved health, and fewer hospitalizations. Enrolling in SNAP also financially benefits low-income seniors and the disabled by freeing up scarce cash resources for other basic needs, such as housing and medications.

Yet despite the need, many eligible Texans find it difficult to enroll in SNAP especially those with limited technology access or proficiency. Completing the SNAP application and recertification process can be overwhelming and without assistance many eligible seniors fail to make it through. Only 36 percent of eligible seniors in Texas participate in SNAP.<sup>1</sup>

HB 701 will improve food security for seniors and the disabled by implementing a simplified SNAP application process for households with no earned income and will extend coverage for 36 months. It will also require the state to identify seniors and the disabled who are enrolled in Medicaid to allow community partners to assist them in applying for SNAP. By making it easier for eligible seniors and the disabled to get SNAP and to stay on for 36 months, Texas will improve the health and well-being of some of its most vulnerable citizens.

### Seniors Struggling With Food Insecurity may Experience a Number of Challenges:



**Food running out**



**Skipping meals**



**Choosing between food and medicine**



**Postponing medical care**



**Poor health outcomes**



**Higher health care use and costs**

SOURCE: FRAC's Hunger and Health series