



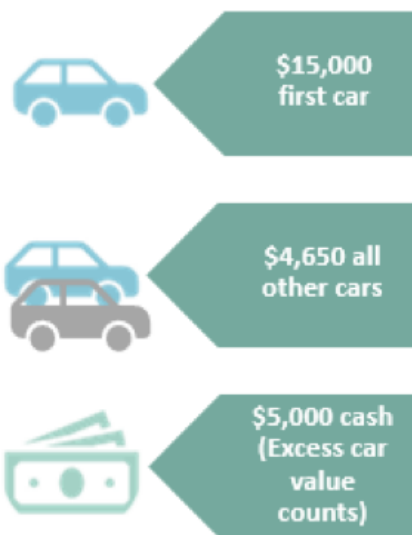
Testimony to the House Human Services Committee Supporting HB 1287

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Every Texan supports HB 1287 by Guillen, as it will reduce hunger in Texas by updating the state's outdated vehicle asset test limits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to reflect the current cost of reliable transportation.

As the record-long lines of cars waiting for help from food banks during the pandemic showed, millions of Texans are a paycheck away from hunger. These are families that work and own cars to get to work, but have limited savings so they have little ability to absorb a loss of income. SNAP is the state's most effective tool to respond quickly to crises like the loss of a job by making it possible for struggling families to buy the food they need at their local grocery store. However, because of Texas' antiquated vehicle limits, thousands of families who meet all other program requirements are disqualified from SNAP each month – even those with little to no income to buy food.



Texas chooses to enforce stringent SNAP eligibility guidelines that go beyond federal requirements. In addition to our income limit, since 2001, Texas has set a resource limit of \$5,000 in countable cash, a first vehicle worth up to \$15,000, and any additional vehicles can be worth up to \$4,650 (any excess vehicle value is counted towards the cash resource limit.) As the limits were never indexed to inflation, they have lost purchasing power over the decades. Texas' SNAP vehicle limits no longer reflect the original intent of the legislature to represent the cost of safe and dependable family cars or trucks.

The negative impact of outdated vehicle limits is magnified because to receive SNAP in Texas most adults must work or be looking for work through the SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program for at least 30 hours per week unless they are exempt. As public transportation options are extremely limited, the vast majority of Texans drive to work, and maintaining steady employment requires owning a vehicle capable of passing the state's rigorous inspection system. The current vehicle limits, especially the lower limit of \$4,650 which was originally set in the 1970s, can no longer cover the cost of a reliable car and disqualifies two-parent and multi-generational families from SNAP assistance.

HB 1287 updates Texas' SNAP vehicle limits to reflect the rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for new vehicles. By indexing to the CPI, it will allow Texas' SNAP vehicle limits to continue to align with the original intent of the Legislature even during periods of inflation. Modernizing the state's vehicle asset limits to capture the prices of today's cars and trucks will allow Texans to access SNAP during times of need so they can feed their families.

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