

SUBJECT: Replacing fingerprinting and photo-imaging for TANF and SNAP

COMMITTEE: Human Services — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Raymond, Gonzalez, Hopson, Hughes, Hunter, Laubenberg,  
V. Taylor

0 nays

2 absent — Morrison, Naishtat

WITNESSES: For — Celia Cole, Center for Public Policy Priorities; Eric Cooper, San Antonio Food Bank and Texas Food Bank Network; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Doris Dwyer, Daughters of Charity Advocacy – Social Justice Committee; Laura Guerra-Cardus, Children’s Defense Fund – TX; Frank Knaack, American Civil Liberties Union of Texas; Diana Martinez, Tex Protects, The Texas Association for the Protection of Children; Anne Olson, Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission; Andrew Rivas, Texas Catholic Conference; Jason Sabo, Children at Risk)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Cindy Alexander, Morphotrak, Inc.; John Kroll, Gemalto, Inc.)

On — Douglas Wilson, Health and Human Services Commission – Office of Inspector General

BACKGROUND: Human Resources Code, sec. 31.0325 requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to develop a fraud prevention program by using fingerprinting or photo-imaging for applicants to financial assistance programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

DIGEST: CSHB 710 would repeal Human Resources Code, sec. 31.0325 and require HHSC to use appropriate technology to confirm the identity of applicants and prevent duplicate participation in TANF and SNAP.

If HHSC determined that a federal waiver or authorization form was needed to implement a provision in the bill, HHSC would be required to

request the waiver or authorization form and could delay implementation until it was granted.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2011.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

The fingerprinting and photo-imaging requirements for TANF and SNAP applications are ineffective, prohibitively costly, and in some cases, deterrents for eligible families who would otherwise apply for these programs.

Accumulating research has shown that fingerprinting and photo-imaging fraud prevention for TANF and SNAP is duplicative. The appropriate technology prescribed by this bill would properly identify applicants and prevent duplicate participation.

The administrative costs of the fingerprinting and photo-imaging are far more costly than the cost savings in fraud prevention. According to the Legislative Budget Board (LBB), CSHB 710 would save the state over \$3 million in the next biennium.

Fingerprinting and photo-imaging requirements force entire eligible families to physically visit a local benefits office in order to apply. CSHB 710 would allow HHSC to modernize its eligibility process, allowing Texans to apply remotely.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

Fingerprinting and photo-imaging are the best methods of preventing fraud and the only ways to properly identify applicants and prevent duplicate participation in TANF and SNAP.

**NOTES:**

LBB determined that CSHB 710 would save \$1.47 million in general revenue in fiscal 2012 and \$1.66 million for the subsequent four fiscal years. The bill also would reduce the amount of required FTEs by 37 in each of the next five fiscal years.