

- SUBJECT:** Providing financial information to recipients of benefits or assistance
- COMMITTEE:** Human Services — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — Raymond, Fallon, Klick, Sanford, Scott Turner, Zerwas
3 nays — N. Gonzalez, Naishtat, Rose
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Bee Moorhead, Texas Impact)

Against — Celia Cole, Texas Food Bank Network; Rachel Cooper, Center for Public Policy Priorities; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Anne Olson, Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission)

On — Stephanie Muth, Health and Human Services Commission; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Stephanie Stephens, Health and Human Services Commission)
- BACKGROUND:** Human Resources Code, ch. 31, governs financial assistance and service programs, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) assistance.

Human Resources Code, ch. 32, governs Medicaid.

Human Resources Code, ch. 33, governs the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly called food stamps.
- DIGEST:** HB 3463 would require the Health and Human Services Commission, when recertifying a person to receive TANF or other financial assistance, Medicaid, or SNAP benefits, to provide information regarding the total amount of benefits or assistance received by the person under all of the programs in the previous year.
- SUPPORTERS SAY:** The intent and focus of HB 3463 would be personal financial education. By providing recipients of financial assistance, medical assistance, and nutrition benefits with a yearly financial statement, the bill would provide an additional tool for Texans to understand their finances.

The statement would be no different nor more humiliating than receiving a yearly health benefits statement from a health insurance company or a yearly employee benefits statement from a private employer. Benefits recipients receiving a yearly statement would be able to make decisions about their finances just as recipients of a yearly health benefits statement would use the statement to inform their financial decisions.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

HB 3463 would create a disincentive for people to seek help when they truly needed it. State benefits programs are designed to provide basic necessities only to households who are in financial straits. A high percentage of SNAP households include a child or an elderly household member, and the majority of TANF recipients are children.

Sending recipients a yearly statement to show what they received from the state would give them the impression it was the wrong thing to do. The bill is unnecessary, as benefits and assistance programs already have rules to encourage self-sufficiency. A financial statement would not help households to make better financial decisions if they already knew they were poor by the act of qualifying for assistance.