

**SUBJECT:** Allowing state employees to be reimbursed for certain purchases

**COMMITTEE:** State Affairs — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 8 ayes — Hunter, Hernandez, Anchía, Dean, Metcalf, Slawson, Smithee, Turner

1 nay — Spiller

4 absent — Geren, Guillen, Raymond, S. Thompson

**WITNESSES:** For — Ray Hymel, Texas Public Employees Association (*Registered, but did not testify*; Joanna Vaughn, Friends Meeting of Austin (Quaker); Tyler Sheldon, Texas State Employees Union; Luke Squires; Calvin Tillman)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*; Katie Naranjo, Travis County Democratic Party; Carl Jacob; Veronica Maples; Samantha McDaniel)

On — Craig Bonds, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (*Registered, but did not testify*; Shawn Hall Lecuona, The Voice of Justice and of Consanguinity; Teresa Weirich)

**BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that current limitations on reimbursement for state employees who purchase meals while traveling on official state business may cause difficulties for certain state employees whose food options within the established restrictions are limited.

**DIGEST:** HB 855 would allow a state agency to reimburse a state employee for groceries purchased within the employee's designated headquarters if the purchase was made the day before or the day the employee travelled to conduct official state business, and the groceries were consumed by the employee while the employee was traveling for official state business.

A state agency could only reimburse a state employee for the prorated portion of groceries consumed each day and would be required to develop a policy for authorizing reimbursements under the bill before providing

reimbursements. A purchase would be considered a meal expense for purposes of determining the limit established by the travel provisions of the General Appropriations Act.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.