

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 3571
By: Rose et al. (Uresti)
Health & Human Services
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The food stamp program provides crucial support to those families making the transition from welfare to work. Currently in Texas, only 50 percent of those who are eligible are enrolled in the program. This equates to approximately two million Texans that are not receiving these fully federally funded benefits. If enrollment was increased to 70 percent, not only would it drive hundreds of millions of new federal dollars into the economy, it would relieve some of the burden on health care programs, such as Medicaid, which is partially state funded.

H.B. 3571 requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish a pilot program under which a private retail business and authorizes HHSC to enter into an agreement for the purpose of increasing outreach efforts and eligibility determinations for the food stamp program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 531.066, Government Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, by adding Section 531.066, as follows:

Sec. 531.066. FOOD STAMP PROGRAM OUTREACH AND ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION PILOT PROGRAM. (a) Requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to develop and implement a pilot program in the South Texas region under which a private retail business that provides services related to the food stamp program administered under Chapter 33 (Nutritional Assistance Programs), Human Resources Code, enters into an agreement with HHSC to support outreach efforts and eligibility determinations for that program.

(b) Authorizes an agreement between HHSC and a private retail business participating in the pilot program to require the business to provide specific informational materials, perform outreach services, as determined by HHSC, and provide space at the retail locations of the business to perform certain pilot program functions.

(c) Authorizes the executive commissioner of HHSC to develop rules regarding the requirements applicable to a private retail business that participates in the program.

(d) Requires HHSC to submit a report to the legislature, not later than December 1, 2008, containing an evaluation of and certain recommendations for the pilot program.

(e) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2009.

SECTION 2. Authorizes a state agency to delay implementing a provision of this Act until a requested federal waiver or authorization necessary to implement that provision is obtained.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2007.