

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1302

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Law & Justice, February 15, 1996

Title: An act relating to crimes involving food stamps.

Brief Description: Revising provisions relating to food stamp crimes.

Sponsors: Representatives Delvin, Costa, Appelwick, Hickel, Robertson, Sheahan, Padden, L. Thomas and Mastin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Law & Justice: 3/16/95 [DP]; 2/15/96 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Smith, Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Haugen, Johnson, Long, McCaslin, Roach and Schow.

Staff: Susan Carlson (786-7418)

Background: The federal food stamp program provides eligible households with food coupons which may be used for the purchase of food products. In Washington, the food stamp program is administered by the Department of Social and Health Services according to the federal statute and regulations.

State law establishes criminal penalties for persons who sell food coupons and purchase or traffic in food coupons. A person who purchases or traffics in food coupons issued to another person under the food stamp program administered under state law is guilty of a class C felony if the coupon's value exceeds \$100 and a gross misdemeanor if the coupon's value is \$100 or less.

The crime of purchasing food coupons requires that the person purchase coupons issued to another person under the state implemented food stamp program. This language has been interpreted as precluding prosecution of a person who purchases food coupons from an undercover police officer because the officer is not issued the coupons under the state program.

Summary of Bill: The crimes relating to unlawful purchase or redemption of food coupons are amended to provide that it is illegal to purchase food stamps as defined by the federal food stamp act or redeem food stamps as defined by the federal food stamp act in violation of the provisions of that act.

References to food "coupons" are replaced with references to food "stamps."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: No one.