

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 2877

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Human Services, Mental Health & Housing, February 23, 2016
Ways & Means, February 29, 2016

Title: An act relating to the distribution of supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits.

Brief Description: Expanding distribution dates for supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Hickel, Zeiger, Riccelli, Sawyer, Wilcox, Kochmar, Stanford, Gregerson and Ormsby).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/17/16, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Human Services, Mental Health & Housing: 2/23/16 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/29/16, 2/29/16 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators O'Ban, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; Darneille, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove and Padden.

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7444)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Braun, Vice Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Hargrove, Ranking Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Member on the Capital Budget; Ranker, Ranking Minority Member, Operating; Bailey, Becker, Billig, Brown, Conway, Darneille, Hasegawa, Nelson, O'Ban, Padden, Parlette, Pedersen, Rolfes, Schoesler and Warnick.

Staff: Brian Sims (786-7431)

Background: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP is a federal program enabling low-income families to purchase eligible food at authorized retail food stores primarily through the use of electronic benefit cards. The U.S. Department of

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Agriculture administers the program at the federal level and the state agencies administer the program at the state and local levels, including determination of eligibility and allotments, and distribution of benefits. In Washington, SNAP is called the Basic Food Program.

Currently, SNAP benefits are distributed from the first through the tenth of every month. States have the authority to stagger SNAP benefit issuance over the entire month as long as no participant goes longer than 40 days between issuance days.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): DSHS must develop recommendations on how to extend the distribution of SNAP benefits in the least costly and least disruptive way. The department may implement the recommendation if they can do so within existing resources.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): Replaces the requirement to issue SNAP benefits over the first 20 days with a requirement for DSHS to develop recommendations on how to extend the distribution of SNAP benefits in the least costly and least disruptive way. The department may implement the recommendation if they can do so within existing resources.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Human Services, Mental Health & Housing): No public hearing was held.

Persons Testifying (Human Services, Mental Health & Housing): N/A.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: N/A.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): This bill will increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables by smoothing out the distribution of SNAP benefits. This will improve nutrition for low income children which will help them succeed in school. It will also allow grocery stores to staff more evenly throughout the month.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Representative Hickel, Prime Sponsor; Amy Brackenbury, Washington Food Industry Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.