
Human Services & Early Learning Committee

HB 2830

Brief Description: Updating restrictions on electronic benefit cards.

Sponsors: Representatives Gregerson, Eslick, Dent and Senn.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exempts certain beer and/or wine specialty stores from the requirement to disable ATM or point-of sale machines from accepting Electronic Benefit Transfer Cards.

Hearing Date: 2/4/20

Staff: Nico Wedekind (786-7290).

Background:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) provides temporary benefits to low-income families with children. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides benefits for recipients to use for the purchase of foods. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, as well as infants and children up to age 5, with benefits including, supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education.

An Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Card is used to distribute food benefits to SNAP recipients and cash benefits for TANF recipients. The benefit amount is electronically added to the card each month. The EBT card can be used at automated teller machines (ATMs) and at stores through a point of sale machine, similar to how debit cards are used. The EBT funds can be used to purchase food items from retailers authorized under the SNAP and WIC programs.

The federal government sets eligibility standards for store to become an authorized SNAP retailer, while states are responsible for determining eligibility standards to authorize retailers to

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participate in the WIC program. The standards concern the variety and quantity of foods available for purchase in the store.

The federal government requires states receiving TANF block grants to maintain policies and practices to prevent EBT cards from being used in any liquor store, casino, gaming establishment, or any retail establishment which provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment. Grocery stores that sell both intoxicating liquor and groceries including staple foods are exempt. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must notify EBT cardholders that using an EBT card or cash obtained with an EBT card for any of the prohibited activities could result in legal proceedings and the forfeiture of all cash benefits.

Washington requires the businesses listed below to disable the ability of the ATMs and point-of-sale machines located on their business premises to accept EBT cards:

- taverns;
- beer/wine specialty stores;
- nightclubs;
- contract liquor stores;
- bail bond agencies;
- gambling establishments;
- tattoo, body piercing, or body art shops;
- adult entertainment venues with performance that contain erotic material where minors under age 18 are prohibited; and
- any establishments where persons under age 18 are not permitted.

The DSHS notifies the licensing board of any of the listed business establishments if they do not comply with the requirement to disable ATM and point-of-sale machines on their business premises from accepting EBT cards.

Beer and/or wine specialty stores are stores licensed to sell beer and/or wine in bottles, cans, and original containers, not to be consumed upon the premises where sold. To obtain or maintain a beer/wine specialty store license, the premises must be stocked with an inventory of beer and/or wine in excess of \$3,000 wholesale value.

Contract liquor stores were privately owned business that had a contract to sell liquor on behalf of the state. However, Initiative No. 1183, approved by the voters in November 2011, privatized the sale of liquor.

Summary of Bill:

Any beer and/or wine specialty store that is also an authorized SNAP or WIC retailer is excluded from having to disable ATM or point-of-sale machines located on their business premises from accepting EBT Cards.

Contract liquor stores are removed from the list of businesses required to disable any ATM or point-of-sale machines located on their business premises from accepting EBT Cards.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 28, 2020.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.