

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1499

As Passed Senate, March 22, 2023

Title: An act relating to food assistance funding.

Brief Description: Concerning food assistance funding.

Sponsors: House Committee on Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning (originally sponsored by Representatives Shavers, Ramel, Santos, Leavitt, Gregerson, Bateman, Ormsby, Doglio, Pollet, Reed, Ortiz-Self, Stonier and Fosse).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/28/23, 95-2.

Committee Activity: Human Services: 3/09/23, 3/14/23 [DP].

Floor Activity: Passed Senate: 3/22/23, 42-7.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that up to 25 percent of food assistance program funding provided by the Washington Department of Agriculture to food banks may be used for essential nonfood items, including diapers, feminine products, and hygiene products.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Wilson, C., Chair; Kauffman, Vice Chair; Boehnke, Ranking Member; Frame, Nguyen, Warnick and Wilson, J..

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7488)

Background: The Washington State Department of Agriculture (AGR) administers state and federal food assistance programs, including the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP). The goal of EFAP is to alleviate hunger by providing funds, technical assistance,

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and information to community programs that deliver emergency goods and services to people in need. Food banks, backpack programs, home delivery, mobile food pantries and voucher programs participate in EFAP.

Essential non-food items may be purchased with EFAP funds, but these purchases cannot exceed 10 percent of the funding allocation.

Summary of Bill: Up to 25 percent of food assistance program funding provided by AGR to food banks may be used for essential nonfood items, including diapers, feminine products, and hygiene products.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Food banks had to quickly adapt to the need for essential nonfood items throughout the pandemic. They couldn't purchase all the nonfood items they needed due to the current threshold. This bill will help them meet the current demand as well as better prepare for the next disaster or pandemic. This bill addresses the flexibility food pantries need and the greater costs they face.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Clyde Shavers, Prime Sponsor; Aaron Czyzewski, Food Lifeline.

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