

Comment Report

SSB 1125

A bill for an act relating to public assistance program oversight.(See SF 389.)

Subcommittee Members: Schultz-CH, Mathis

Date: 02/15/2021

Time: 11:30 AM

Location: RM 24A

Name: Nora Tobin

Comment: I urge you to oppose SSB 1125. This is a bad bill that would create barriers for people accessing public assistance programs. At a time when too many Iowans are struggling to make ends meet, this bill is the last thing we need. Establishing an asset limit would decrease access and kick people off Food Assistance (SNAP), meaning that households with more than one vehicle would be at risk of losing eligibility to Food Assistance benefits. Having a vehicle can be the difference between finding employment or not, especially in rural areas of the state without public transit. Asset limits have been shown to discourage people who are eligible from applying for SNAP, increase administrative costs. Further, asset limits discourage people from saving for emergencies, which is counterproductive long term as families seek to build savings such that they no longer need food assistance. This bill would require both custodial and noncustodial parents to cooperate with the child support recovery unit to receive Food Assistance. There is no evidence this type of policy generates significantly more child support payments to custodial households. There is not a way to implement this provision that does not result in taking food away from children. Custodial parents may have an informal arrangement, be a victim of domestic violence, or have other reasons why they have chosen not to seek child support payments from a noncustodial parent. Taking away Food Assistance benefits from a noncustodial parent who cannot afford to pay child support does nothing to improve the financial situation of that parent and their child. This bill is bad for Iowans, and a bad look for policymakers to focus on creating barriers and restrictions to food access during a time when far too many families are struggling to make ends meet during this pandemic.

Name: Molly Hanson

Comment: This bill would create too many barriers for people accessing public assistance benefits. At a time when too many Iowans are struggling to make ends meet, this bill is the last thing we need. As elected officials, I would urge you to remember that you represent your constituents. It is literally your job to do the most good for the most people as much as you can. You seem to be confused and think that since being elected, you speak on our behalf and that is just not so. You need to speak less and listen more. You need to take care of the people who are hurting under this dangerous administration and you need to stop pushing a far right agenda upholds white supremacy.

Name: PJ Merrick

Comment: This is my second attempt to influence the refusal of SSB1125. There are so many ways this is bad proposed legislation that I do not even know where to begin..And to think this is being introduced during this time in our sad state's treatment of the disadvantaged. To keep this short, PLEASE reject all the evil this introduces into the lives around us. Please....

Name: Brigham Hoegh

Comment: This is the second time I've written on this legislation. People don't apply for SNAP benefits for fun. People are not in general out to abuse our safety nets. I oppose any legislation that makes it more difficult for Iowans to access SNAP. Let's save the inefficiency and hassle (which costs taxpayer dollars) and show decency and respect to those who ask for help.

Name: Freedom Malik-Roberts

Comment: Do not support this bill. SSB 1125 would reduce the number of people who can access food assistance programs at a time when more people than ever need it. There is no reason to tie food assistance with child support. Single parents may have an informal arrangement, be a victim of domestic violence, or have other reasons why they have chosen not to seek child support payments from the other parent. This bill will present a significant access barrier to many people, especially those without internet access, limited credit history, or limited English proficiency. Anything that does that borders on being racist, so watch it, Shultz. There is also not a way to implement this provision that does not result in taking food away from children, whether it's because the parent they live with has too many vehicles that they might not even own, registered at where they live or the parent that gets them on the weekend doesn't officially pay child support because they can't afford it and now they don't have extra food for the kid.

Name: Nora Dwyer

Comment: Please reconsider this bill. Many people need a vehicle to get to jobs and even access other services. This makes no sense!

Name: Margaret Vernon

Comment: I urge you to oppose SSB1125. It will make it more difficult for those who need food assistance to receive it. It would also create a new system that we/Iowa/taxpayers will have to fund. That is unnecessary when we already have a system in place. Years ago, I worked for Linn County Department of Human Services, and sometime after that was on the Warren County Welfare Board. It has been my experience that the vast majority of people who apply for assistance such as this are in dire need. I have also been in touch with people who never expected to have to apply for assistance yet were put into a position where they had nowhere else to go. We need to support these Iowans and be careful not to be inappropriately skeptical of those who are in trouble. Margaret Vernon