

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
89th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2013

A Bill

SENATE BILL 1145

By: Senator L. Chesterfield

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON CURRENT ASSET LIMITS FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT PROGRAMS OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES TO DETERMINE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION EFFECTIVENESS, CONSISTENCY, AND EFFICIENCY, AND THE POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGING ASSET LIMITS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO EVALUATE CURRENT ASSET LIMITS FOR TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES AND THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Public benefit programs currently restrict eligibility to individuals and families with few or no assets to ensure public resources are accurately allocated to those most in need;

(2) However, resource and asset limits disincentivize savings and deter families from making investments, thus potentially increasing the time a family stays on public benefits;

(3) Moreover, in theory, asset limits would preclude benefits to Arkansans who are only marginally better off than those who would qualify;



(4) Presently, the asset limit for the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program is three thousand dollars (\$3,000) and two thousand dollars (\$2,000) for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program;

(5) While state officials could raise or eliminate the asset limits for both programs, such a change may affect all benefit programs administered by the Department of Human Services;

(6) A more prudent approach would be to analyze the potential effects of raising or eliminating the asset limits on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; and

(7) Therefore, the Eighty-ninth General Assembly directs the Department of Human Services to conduct a study on the program effectiveness, consistency, and efficiency of administering public benefits with asset limits.

SECTION 2. DO NOT CODIFY. (a) The Department of Human Services shall conduct a study to:

(1) Determine the number of applicants denied access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families based on resource limits or asset limits, or both;

(2) Determine the cost associated with verifying resource limits and asset limits, including without limitation staff time and department resources; and

(3) Consider the cost implications related to changing the resource limits and asset limits, including without limitation a review and evaluation of information on practices, policies, and trends regarding asset limits, and the applicability of resource limits and asset limits to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

(b) No later than thirty (30) days after the effective date of this act, the department shall report on findings under this section along with recommendations for further action and for proposed legislation for appropriate changes to resource limits and asset limits to the Legislative Council.