

HB 451 -- SNAP BENEFITS

SPONSOR: Bailey

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 10 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 4.

This bill requires a parent, caretaker relative, putative father, or identified noncustodial parent to cooperate with the child support program to be eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

This bill is the same as HB 1597 (2020).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this requires a noncustodial parent to pay child support to receive SNAP benefits. The issue the bill is trying to address is with certain parents trying to avoid having to pay child support. This makes voluntary participation mandatory. Because the goal is to lift single parents out of poverty and to use more child support to feed kids rather than food stamps.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Bailey; Opportunity Solutions Project; and Arnie C. Dienoff.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that they appreciate the intent and supporting kids and resources for kids but the effect would be that kids who are under-resourced because of a noncustodial parent would be further under-resourced because there would be less food available to the child or children. This is probably a motivator for some parents but removing food and help from families leads to higher rates of child abuse. There are many states who have enacted these policies and have repealed them because they found that they are not effective. There would be \$3-\$5 million worth of food less for the kids. To receive TANF, parents need to cooperate and most people are probably already doing that so it is possible that this legislation is not necessary. The custodial parent has to cooperate and so does the non-custodial parent. There is already a requirement that they cooperate so this is going to cost more money and people might choose to not cooperate.

Testifying against the bill were the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic And Sexual Violence (MCADSV); Valerie Nicholson-Watson, Harvesters--The Community Food Network; KC Healthy Kids; Empower Missouri; Sarah Ritter, Operation Food Search; and Operation Food Search.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.