



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 224**

February Session, 2002

Substitute House Bill No. 5556

*House of Representatives, March 28, 2002*

The Committee on Human Services reported through REP. GERRATANA of the 23rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## ***AN ACT CONCERNING FOOD STAMP ELIGIBILITY.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17b-105a of the general statutes is repealed and  
2 the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2002*):

3 (a) The Commissioner of Social Services shall seek a waiver from  
4 federal law to allow persons who live in an area in which (1) the  
5 unemployment rate is greater than ten per cent, or (2) there is an  
6 insufficient number of jobs to provide such persons with employment,  
7 to be exempt from the three-month participation limit of the food  
8 stamp program implemented pursuant to the Food Stamp Act of 1977.

9 (b) The Commissioner of Social Services shall implement the federal  
10 option to allow applicants for, or recipients of, food stamps to retain a  
11 car valued up to the limit established under the temporary family  
12 assistance program.

13 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2002*) The Department of Social

14 Services, pursuant to section 17b-790 of the general statutes, shall be  
15 required to pursue the maximum food stamp benefit extensions  
16 permitted by the Code of Federal Regulations Title 7, Part 273, Section  
17 273.12, for those households leaving the Temporary Assistance to  
18 Needy Families program.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2002</i>
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2002</i>

**HS**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

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**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:**

<b>Fund-Type</b>	<b>Agency Affected</b>	<b>Current FY \$</b>	<b>FY 03 \$</b>	<b>FY 04 \$</b>
GF - Cost	Dept of Social Services	None	Minimal	Minimal

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to allow Food Stamp recipients to own a car valued up to \$9,500. This would increase the number of participants in the Food Stamp program (currently approximately 70,000 per month). However, as Food Stamp benefits are entirely federally funded, no increased state costs would result due to benefits. DSS may incur increased administrative costs due to the increased caseload. Any such increase in administrative costs is expected to be minimal and can be handled within anticipated budgetary resources.

The bill also requires DSS to pursue the maximum Food Stamp benefits permitted by federal regulation. As the bill requires DSS undertake this effort as part of its existing requirement to educate and inform Food Stamp applicants and recipients, this new requirement is not expected to lead to any increased costs.

**OLR Bill Analysis**

sHB 5556

***AN ACT CONCERNING FOOD STAMP ELIGIBILITY*****SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioner to allow Food Stamp applicants and recipients to own a car valued up to the limit established in the Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) program. This effectively increases the limit from \$4,650 to \$9,500.

The bill also requires DSS to pursue the maximum Food Stamp benefit extensions permitted by federal regulation for households leaving the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The regulations limit this extension to three months. DSS must pursue the extension pursuant to the law that requires it to educate and inform Food Stamp applicants and recipients about the program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2002 for benefit extension and October 1, 2002 for motor vehicle allowance change.

**BACKGROUND*****Federal Food Stamp Provisions***

Federal law allows states to increase their Food Stamp program's vehicle allowance to the same allowance used in their TANF-funded "assistance" program if this would make the household eligible for Food Stamps ((7 USC § 2014 (g)(2)(D)). TFA is the state's largest TANF-funded program.

Pending Food Stamp regulations allow state Food Stamp agencies (DSS in Connecticut) to provide certain households leaving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) with transitional Food Stamp benefits (7 CFR § 273.12). The regulations allow the state agency to freeze, for up to three months, the household's Food Stamp benefit at the level the household received while still receiving TANF assistance. (States must adjust upwards the Food Stamp benefits of households losing income as a result of losing TANF assistance before beginning

this transitional period.) Doing so enables families to continue to receive uninterrupted benefits without having to go through a recertification process until the transition period expires.

***DSS Informing Food Stamp Clients***

The law requires DSS to provide a nutrition assistance program in accordance with the federal Food Stamp law (CGS § 17b-790). It also requires the agency to inform applicants and recipients about their rights and responsibilities under the program.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 18    Nay 0