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College SNAP Bill Would Help Low-Income Students Graduate

Short-term food assistance can improve long-term economic outcomes for students.

TEXAS – Feeding Texas is excited to announce bill sponsors for key legislation that would fight hunger on college campuses. Sen. Royce West (D-Dallas) and Rep. Armando Walle (D-Houston) have filed companion bills in the Senate and House that would help improve college completion rates by maintaining access to SNAP for low-income students.

[SB 557](#) and [HB 1501](#) would instruct the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to identify college degree programs that are vocational or technical in nature so that students enrolled in these programs can receive SNAP benefits.

“College students in Texas should not have to choose between food and education,” **said Celia Cole, CEO of Feeding Texas.** “We commend Senator West and Representative Walle for taking up this cause. The legislature must act to ensure students can continue to access the food assistance they need to finish their degrees and go on to gainful employment.”

Though federal policy severely restricts access to SNAP for college students, Congress made changes to guarantee food assistance for more students during the pandemic. However, this policy will expire when the Public Health Emergency ends, and thousands of students could lose their SNAP benefits at recertification.

“Our workforce depends on students graduating with the skills and training they need to succeed,” **Sen. West said.** “College tuition costs are rising, and with current inflation, so are the costs of housing, food, and other necessities. Even the price of eggs has skyrocketed to over \$7 a carton. Eliminating hunger on Texas college campuses is critical to ensure our workforce remains strong and our future leaders thrive.”

The inability to afford basic needs is the number one reason cited by community college students for not completing their education. Even with tuition aid, 38% of students at two-year colleges and 29% of students at four-year universities experience hunger, according to a recent [#RealCollege survey](#).

“A simple change in policy would allow low-income students in vocational and technical degree programs to access SNAP while they pursue their educational goals,” **Rep. Walle said.** “Improving short-term food assistance would help thousands of Texas students along their path to economic self-sufficiency. This legislation is a win-win and makes good business sense for Texas.”

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Feeding Texas leads a unified effort for a hunger-free Texas. Learn more and find your local food bank at www.feedingtexas.org.