



2011 SENATE BILL 523

February 28, 2012 – Introduced by Senators DARLING, LAZICH, WANGGAARD, LASEE, GALLOWAY and COWLES, cosponsored by Representatives KERKMAN, KRUG, JACQUE, PRIDEMORE, SPANBAUER, BERNIER, BALLWEG, MARKLEIN, KNODL, WYNN, KUGLITSCH, THIESFELDT, KAUFERT, ENDSLEY, STROEBEL and BROOKS. Referred to Committee on Judiciary, Utilities, Commerce, and Government Operations.

- 1 **AN ACT to create** 49.795 (1) (dm) and 49.795 (7m) of the statutes; **relating to:**
2 trafficking food stamp program benefits.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Under current law, the Department of Health Services administers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the food stamp program and currently known in Wisconsin as FoodShare, under which eligible low-income individuals and families receive cash assistance to purchase food. Current law provides penalties for various offenses related to SNAP. For example, under current law, a person who makes a misleading or fraudulent statement on a SNAP application is subject to a penalty that is based on the value of the SNAP benefits involved in the offense and the number of SNAP offenses that the person has previously committed. Other SNAP offenses subject to penalty include: failing to report changes in income or assets as required by federal law, transferring SNAP benefits for a purpose other than purchasing food, and issuing SNAP benefits to a person who is not eligible to receive the benefits.

This bill adds trafficking SNAP benefits to the list of SNAP offenses that are subject to penalties under current law. Under the bill, a person traffics SNAP benefits if the person does any of the following:

1. Buys, sells, steals, or otherwise exchanges SNAP benefits issued and accessed through the electronic benefit transfer program, or manually, for cash or other consideration.
2. Exchanges firearms, ammunition, explosives, or controlled substances for SNAP benefits.

SENATE BILL 523

3. Uses SNAP benefits to purchase food that has a container deposit for the sole purpose of returning the container for a cash refund.

4. Resells food purchased with SNAP benefits for cash or other consideration.

5. Purchases, for cash or other consideration, food that was previously purchased from a supplier using SNAP benefits.

Because this bill creates a new crime or revises a penalty for an existing crime, the Joint Review Committee on Criminal Penalties may be requested to prepare a report concerning the proposed penalty and the costs or savings that are likely to result if the bill is enacted.

For further information see the *state* fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

1 **SECTION 1.** 49.795 (1) (dm) of the statutes is created to read:

2 49.795 (1) (dm) “Traffic food stamp program benefits” means to do any of the
3 following:

4 1. Buy, sell, steal, or otherwise accomplish the exchange of, directly, indirectly,
5 in collusion with others, or individually, food stamp program benefits issued and
6 accessed through the electronic benefit transfer program under s. 49.797, or by
7 manual voucher and signature, for cash or other consideration that is not food.

8 2. Exchange firearms, ammunition, explosives, or controlled substances, as
9 defined in 21 USC 802, for food stamp program benefits.

10 3. Use food stamp program benefits to purchase food that includes a container
11 deposit for the sole purpose of discarding the container contents and returning the
12 container for a cash refund of the deposit.

13 4. Resell food purchased with food stamp program benefits for the purpose of
14 obtaining cash or other consideration that is not food.

15 5. Purchase, for cash or other consideration that is not food, food that was
16 previously purchased from a supplier using food stamp program benefits.

