

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1020
By: Hughes
State Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the difficulties faced by state employees in purchasing groceries in advance of state-required travel, which has led to employees purchasing groceries from unfamiliar locations with potentially higher or unknown risks of exposure. S.B. 1020 seeks to address this issue by allowing state agencies to reimburse state employees for groceries purchased in advance of travel or while traveling on official state business. This ability could result in cost savings to agencies because staff could more easily purchase groceries for business travel rather than relying solely on spending funds at eating establishments. Furthermore, if staff have the ability to shop for groceries in their own designated headquarters, agencies would likely see additional savings in cost and time.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 1020 amends the Government Code to authorize an applicable state agency to reimburse a state employee for food items sold at a grocery store, supermarket, or other similar retail establishment purchased within the employee's designated headquarters under the following conditions:

- the purchase is made the day before or the day the employee travels to conduct official state business; and
- the employee consumes the groceries while away from the employee's designated headquarters traveling for official state business.

The bill limits the reimbursement to the prorated portion of food items the employee consumes each day while traveling and establishes that such a purchase is considered a meal expense for purposes of determining the limit established by the travel provisions of the General Appropriations Act for meal expenses. The bill requires an agency to develop a policy for authorizing such grocery reimbursements before the agency may reimburse an employee.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.