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HOUSE BILL 2009

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State of Washington                      52nd Legislature                      1991 Regular Session

By Representatives Bray, Winsley, Leonard, Hochstatter, Ludwig, Prentice, Brekke, Jacobsen and Mitchell.

Read first time February 19, 1991. Referred to Committee on Human Services\Appropriations.

1            AN ACT Relating to state supplementation of the supplemental  
2 security income program; amending RCW 74.04.620; creating a new  
3 section; providing an effective date; and making an appropriation.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.**            The legislature finds that the  
6 supplemental security income program represents a significant effort by  
7 the federal government to build a secure floor under the incomes of a  
8 particularly vulnerable group, low-income elderly, blind, and disabled  
9 people. That effort has fallen far short of providing this group with  
10 a minimally adequate income.

11            The legislature finds that the current state supplement to the  
12 federal benefit still leaves elderly, blind, and disabled people with  
13 income levels substantially below the poverty line. The purchasing  
14 power of that supplement has experienced severe erosion since 1975.

1       The legislature finds that the state supplement must be raised in  
2 amounts that, when added to the federal benefit, will result in incomes  
3 at the poverty line. This is necessary in order to prevent blind,  
4 disabled, and elderly people from experiencing social disorders, health  
5 problems, and increased utilization of long-term care services  
6 including institutionalization.

7       **Sec. 2.** RCW 74.04.620 and 1983 1st ex.s. c 41 s 37 are each  
8 amended to read as follows:

9       (1) The department is authorized to establish a program of state  
10 supplementation to the national program of supplemental security income  
11 consistent with Public Law 92-603 and Public Law 93-66 to those persons  
12 who are in need thereof in accordance with eligibility requirements  
13 established by the department.

14       (2) The department is authorized to establish reasonable standards  
15 of assistance and resource and income exemptions specifically for such  
16 program of state supplementation which shall be consistent with the  
17 provisions of the Social Security Act.

18       (3) The department is authorized to make payments to applicants for  
19 supplemental security income, pursuant to agreements as provided in  
20 Public Law 93-368, who are otherwise eligible for general assistance.

21       (4) Any agreement between the department and a supplemental  
22 security income applicant providing for the reimbursement of interim  
23 assistance to the department shall provide, if the applicant has been  
24 represented by an attorney, that twenty-five percent of the  
25 reimbursement received shall be withheld by the department and all or  
26 such portion thereof as has been approved as a fee by the United States  
27 department of health and human services shall be released directly to  
28 the applicant's attorney. The secretary may maintain such records as  
29 are deemed appropriate to measure the cost and effectiveness of such

1 agreements and may make recommendations concerning the continued use of  
2 such agreements to the legislature.

3 (5) The department shall provide a state supplement payment level  
4 that, when added to the federal benefit, will equal the federal poverty  
5 guideline as determined annually by the federal department of health  
6 and human services. This subsection shall not apply to payments to  
7 individuals residing in medicaid facilities.

8 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. Section 2 of this act shall take effect  
9 on January 1, 1992.

10 NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. The sum of eighty-nine million dollars,  
11 or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the  
12 biennium ending June 30, 1993, from the general fund to the department  
13 of social and health services, solely to increase the state supplement  
14 payment level to an amount that, when added to the federal benefit,  
15 will equal the official federal poverty income level.