

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1880

As Reported By House Committee On:

Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to welfare fraud.

Brief Description: Making persons convicted of certain crimes relating to receipt of public assistance ineligible for public assistance for five years.

Sponsors: Representatives Boldt, Benton, Schoesler, L. Thomas, Carrell, Johnson, Radcliff, Blanton, McMahan, Campbell, Smith, Honeyford, Silver and Thompson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/23/95, 2/28/95 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Cooke, Chairman; Lambert, Vice Chairman; Stevens, Vice Chairman; Boldt; Buck; Carrell; Padden and Patterson.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Thibaudeau, Ranking Minority Member; Brown, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; and Tokuda.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background: If a recipient of public assistance is convicted of a crime or offense and imprisoned, their assistance is ended during the period of imprisonment. At the end of their imprisonment if they meet eligibility standards they resume receiving public assistance.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Recipients of public assistance who provide false or misleading information to qualify for or retain eligibility for assistance will be ineligible six months for a first offense, 12 months for a second offense, and permanently ineligible for a third offense.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The requirement that a public assistance recipient who is convicted of a crime related to the unlawful receipt of public

assistance and becomes ineligible for public assistance for five years from the date of conviction is replaced with the same ineligibility sanctions applied to people who defraud the food stamp program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 16, 1995.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: People on public assistance have a difficult time making ends meet on the current welfare grant. This legislation imposes a penalty which is too severe.

Testified: Bill Bergh, Department of Social and Health Services (concerns); and Gwen L. Orwiler, Fair Budget Action Campaign (con).