
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1880

State of Washington

54th Legislature

1995 Regular Session

By House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Boldt, Benton, Schoesler, L. Thomas, Carrell, Johnson, Radcliff, Blanton, McMahan, Campbell, Smith, Honeyford, Silver and Thompson)

Read first time 03/01/95.

1 AN ACT Relating to welfare fraud; amending RCW 74.08.290; creating
2 a new section; and prescribing penalties.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that those individuals
5 who abuse and defraud the welfare system not only steal scarce
6 resources, but also perpetuate myths about people on public assistance.
7 The taxpayers of this state have limited resources with which to help
8 those in need and it is imperative that the legislature use its
9 authority to ensure that those resources are assisting the truly needy.

10 To protect the integrity of the welfare system the legislature must
11 put into place mechanisms that guard against abuse. The message must
12 be sent that we will not tolerate welfare fraud.

13 People who are caught abusing public trust by defrauding the
14 welfare system should be punished and not allowed to receive public
15 assistance.

16 **Sec. 2.** RCW 74.08.290 and 1959 c 26 s 74.08.290 are each amended
17 to read as follows:

1 (1) The department is hereby authorized to suspend temporarily the
2 public assistance granted to any person for any period during which
3 such person is not in need thereof.

4 (2) If a recipient is convicted of any crime or offense, and
5 punished by imprisonment, no payment shall be made during the period of
6 imprisonment.

7 (3)(a) If an applicant or recipient of public assistance
8 intentionally provides a false or misleading statement or act designed
9 to misrepresent, conceal, or withhold facts for the purpose of
10 establishing or maintaining eligibility for public assistance or for
11 increasing, or preventing a reduction in, the amount of a grant, then,
12 the applicant or recipient shall be considered in violation of this
13 subsection (3)(a) and shall be subject to the penalties provided in (b)
14 of this subsection.

15 (b) An individual who is found to have committed a violation of (a)
16 of this subsection by a state administrative law judge or by a state
17 court or federal court shall be ineligible for continued public
18 assistance for the following periods:

19 (i) Six months for the first violation;

20 (ii) Twelve months for the second violation; and

21 (iii) Permanently for the third violation.

22 For the purpose of applying these penalties, numerous violations on a
23 single application, or in a single statement, made by an individual
24 shall count as one violation.

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