

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 5798

As Passed House:

April 12, 1999

Title: An act relating to temporary assistance for needy families.

Brief Description: Assisting needy families.

Sponsors: Senators Fairley, Winsley and Franklin; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 3/29/99, 3/31/99 [DP];

Appropriations: 4/5/99 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/12/99, 94-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Obsolete provisions under the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children program are deleted from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.
- Older disabled students and other students living with their families will be continued on the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families grant.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives D. Sommers, Republican Co-Chair; Tokuda, Democratic Co-Chair; Boldt, Republican Vice Chair; Kagi, Democratic Vice Chair; Campbell; Carrell; Dickerson; Eickmeyer; Kastama and Pflug.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 32 members: Representatives Huff, Republican Co-Chair; H. Sommers, Democratic Co-Chair; Alexander, Republican Vice Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; D. Schmidt, Republican Vice Chair; Barlean; Benson; Boldt; Carlson; Clements; Cody; Crouse; Gombosky; Grant; Kagi; Keiser; Kenney; Kessler; Lambert; Linville; Lisk; Mastin; McIntire; McMorris; Mulliken; Parlette; Regala; Rockefeller; Ruderman; Sullivan; Tokuda and Wensman.

Staff: Julie Salvi (786-7349).

Background:

The benefits of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are generally available to qualified families with dependent children under the age of 18. Children up to the age of 19 are eligible if they are expected to complete school. Older dependent children, no matter what their condition, do not qualify a family for TANF grant assistance.

When considering a family's assets to determine financial qualification, the earned income of a dependent child who is a full-time student is disregarded. A state standard of need is applied to the family's assets.

In addition, welfare is not generally payable to a family in any month in which the adult in the family is participating in a strike.

Summary of Bill:

When determining a family's qualification for TANF, the state standard of need is not considered and the earned income of a dependent child who is a full-time student is not disregarded. Otherwise qualified families are not prohibited from receiving welfare if the adult ("caretaker relative") is involved in a strike.

Children between 18 and 21 years of age who have disabilities and are full-time students may receive TANF assistance. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is also authorized to grant eligibility exceptions to children between 18 and 21, on a discretionary basis, if DSHS determines that the exception will enable the child to complete his or her high school education, GED, or vocational education.

Legal immigrant eligibility for state food assistance is clarified. Reference to federal law is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on March 23, 1999.

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

Testimony For: (Children & Family Services) Obsolete provisions of the old welfare system should be removed. Older disabled students and other students living with their parents should be continued on the family grant while the students are in school.

(Appropriations) This is a good use of federal welfare money to help at-risk people complete their education without disruption and possibly avert welfare in the future. Allowing these children to continue to receive assistance while completing their education will help keep families together.

Testimony Against: (Children & Family Services) None.

(Appropriations) None.

Testified: (Children & Family Services) (In support) Liz Dunbar, Department of Social and Health Services; and Eric Paige, Washington State Catholic Conference.

(Appropriations) Randi Abrams, Jewish Federation; and Eric Paige, Washington State Catholic Conference.