

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 5798

As Passed Senate, March 17, 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: Labor & Workforce Development: 2/15/99, 2/25/99 [DPA].

Ways & Means: 3/4/99, 3/5/99 [DPA (LWD)].

Passed Senate, 3/17/99, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Hochstatter, Kline, Oke and Wojahn.

Staff: Joanne Conrad (786-7472)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Labor & Workforce Development.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Chair; Bauer, Vice Chair; Fairley, Fraser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Thibaudeau, West, Winsley and Wojahn.

Minority Report: Do not pass as amended.

Signed by Senator Zarelli.

Staff: Brian Sims (786-7431)

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 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.

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

Testimony For: This will provide DSHS with regulatory streamlining and rule simplification, and allow TANF continuation for some students.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Liz Dunbar, DSHS; Eric Paige, WA State Catholic Conference; Randi Abrams, Jewish Federation.