

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5481

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As of February 9, 2001

**Title:** An act relating to conformity with federal law regarding Title 74 RCW.

**Brief Description:** Establishing conformity with federal law regarding Title 74 RCW.

**Sponsors:** Senators Fairley and Kohl-Welles.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Human Services & Corrections: 2/9/01.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

**Staff:** Chelsea Buchanan (786-7446)

**Background:** In 1996, Congress replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) entitlement with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Washington State enacted its version of TANF, WorkFirst, in 1997. At that time, neither federal nor Washington State laws specifically defined "assistance."

Final federal TANF regulations took effect in 1999. These contain a new definition of assistance as "cash, payments, vouchers, and other forms of benefits designed to meet a family's ongoing basic needs" (45 CFR 260.31). All of the restrictions associated with the TANF program, such as work requirements, time limits, and child support assignments, apply to people receiving assistance. The regulation excludes from the definition of assistance a list of other services, such as child care and transportation for working families. Under federal law, these services are acceptable expenditures of TANF block grant funds, but are excluded from the restrictions on assistance.

Washington WorkFirst law has not been updated to meet the federal definition of assistance. At this time, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) rules restrict support services (such as those above) to former cash assistance recipients working more than 20 hours per week. They may receive these services for up to 12 months after leaving assistance.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The definitions section for TANF is moved from Chapter 74.12 RCW (TANF) to Chapter 74.08A RCW (WorkFirst TANF). The definition includes two new categories which conform it to federal law: "cash assistance" and "support services." "Cash assistance" matches the federal definition of assistance outlined above. "Support services" match the list of services excluded from the federal definition of assistance but authorized as acceptable expenditures of TANF funds.

References in the law to "recipient," "grant," "assistance," and TANF are revised to ensure consistency.

WorkFirst funding restrictions are amended to allow TANF funds (state and federal) to also be used to provide federally authorized support services, within available funds. DSHS is granted authority to establish eligibility standards for these support services.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The original bill was not considered.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 5, 2001.

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