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SENATE BILL 5031

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State of Washington

57th Legislature

2001 Regular Session

By Senator Franklin

Read first time 01/08/2001. Referred to Committee on Human Services & Corrections.

1 AN ACT Relating to transportation for recipients of temporary  
2 assistance for needy families; adding a new section to chapter  
3 74.08A RCW; creating new sections; and declaring an emergency.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that families  
6 receiving temporary assistance for needy families face many  
7 barriers to economic success. According to recent studies, lack  
8 of reliable transportation to work and to school and child care  
9 sites is one of the primary barriers to consistent  
10 employment. Families without reliable transportation are faced with  
11 the struggle to get children to school and child care sites, and  
12 parents to work, in situations where public transportation is  
13 lacking or impractical. Families that own cars are sometimes unable  
14 to pay for adequate maintenance. The result can be losing a job  
15 because of poor attendance, another setback in a life of struggle.

16 Unlike some of the other, less tangible, primary barriers to  
17 employment such as mental health conditions or alcohol or

1 substance abuse problems, the lack of a reliable means of  
2 transportation can be solved in some cases, by providing the  
3 family with access to its own vehicle.

4 The legislature finds that other states have created programs  
5 called "wheels to work," to provide qualifying adults receiving  
6 temporary assistance for needy families with a method of acquiring  
7 a vehicle in order to stabilize their employment. These programs  
8 have met with some success.

9 The legislature intends that Washington establish a wheels to  
10 work program, as a public-private partnership, to provide  
11 qualified families on temporary assistance for needy families with  
12 the ability to own a vehicle. The legislature intends to study the  
13 costs and benefits of the wheels to work program.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.08A  
15 RCW to read as follows:

16 (1) The wheels to work program is established in the  
17 department. The program will accept donated vehicles and provide  
18 them to qualified adults receiving temporary assistance for needy  
19 families. For the first year of the program, the department shall  
20 contract with a private nonprofit entity to operate the program in  
21 three locations, one in Pierce county, one in Yakima county, and  
22 one in Spokane county. The program shall be expanded statewide one  
23 year after implementation.

24 (2) The entity under contract with the department shall  
25 determine the acceptability of donated vehicles, based upon the  
26 needs of the program and the budget constraints of the entity. The  
27 entity shall only accept driveable vehicles, and shall not accept  
28 vehicles for parts or scrap, but may accept charitable donations  
29 of funds to use in the repair or maintenance of the donated  
30 vehicles. The entity shall assume title on acceptance of the  
31 donated vehicle, and shall provide a receipt for tax purposes to  
32 the vehicle donor.

33 (3) In addition to obtaining donated vehicles for the wheels to  
34 work program, the department may, at its election, choose to make  
35 interagency arrangements with state and local government motor  
36 pools in order to acquire government surplus vehicles for use in  
37 the program. The department may also purchase vehicles from the

1 commercial market for use in the program, if the vehicles meet  
2 recipient asset and resource considerations and are inspected and  
3 certified by an independent mechanic before their use by  
4 recipients.

5 (4) Upon donation of a vehicle and transfer of title, the donor  
6 is not liable for any damage, repair, emissions compliance,  
7 vehicle insurance, or determination of vehicle safety.

8 (5) Donated vehicles shall be available for a six-month lease  
9 for thirty dollars per month to qualified adult recipients of  
10 temporary assistance for needy families who have a verifiable job  
11 for which the vehicle is essential transportation. Qualified  
12 recipients must possess a valid Washington driver's license and be  
13 insurable. The department shall certify to the entity that the  
14 applicant for a vehicle is a qualified recipient. For the first six  
15 months of the lease term, the department shall cover the cost of  
16 the recipient's car insurance premium. At the end of six months,  
17 the qualified recipient shall provide insurance for the vehicle,  
18 and continue paying thirty dollars per month for an additional six-  
19 month lease term. During the twelve months of the total lease term,  
20 the entity shall provide all necessary repairs to the vehicle and  
21 ensure emissions compliance, except that the recipient shall be  
22 responsible for normal vehicle maintenance. At the end of the  
23 twelve-month lease term, title to the vehicle shall be transferred  
24 to the recipient.

25 (6) If the recipient leaves employment without good cause, the  
26 recipient has thirty days to find new employment or the vehicle  
27 shall be returned to the entity and the lease canceled.

28 (7) If the recipient leasing the vehicle is convicted of any  
29 felony in violation of Title 9 or 9A RCW, including driving under  
30 the influence of alcohol or drugs, after the inception of the  
31 lease, the leased vehicle shall be returned to the entity and the  
32 lease canceled.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The department of social and health  
34 services shall contract with the Washington state institute for  
35 public policy to perform a study of the wheels for work program,  
36 including at the minimum a cost-benefit analysis, and an

1 evaluation of the extent to which access to a personal vehicle  
2 enabled the family on assistance to progress toward economic  
3 independence.

4 The institute for public policy shall, as part of the pilot  
5 project design, develop protocols for selection from the pool of  
6 WorkFirst clients eligible for wheels to work transportation  
7 assistance, in order to assure random assignment of clients and  
8 enable clear identification of the costs and benefits attributable  
9 to the pilot program.

10 The institute for public policy shall report to the legislature  
11 one year after the implementation of the program, on the progress  
12 of the study. The report shall include, without limitation, a  
13 comparison of program administration expenditures versus  
14 reductions, if any, in the use of welfare grants, food stamps,  
15 medical assistance, and WorkFirst support services, such as child  
16 care subsidies, clothing expenses, and other types of  
17 transportation assistance. Any participant benefits, such as  
18 increased earnings, shall also be included.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** If any part of this act is found to be in  
20 conflict with federal requirements that are a prescribed condition  
21 to the allocation of federal funds to the state, the conflicting  
22 part of this act is inoperative solely to the extent of the  
23 conflict and with respect to the agencies directly affected, and  
24 this finding does not affect the operation of the remainder of  
25 this act in its application to the agencies concerned. Rules  
26 adopted under this act must meet federal requirements that are a  
27 necessary condition to the receipt of federal funds by the state.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
29 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of  
30 the state government and its existing public institutions, and  
31 takes effect immediately.

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