
Appropriations Committee

HB 2121

Brief Description: Repealing income eligibility for temporary assistance for needy families benefits for a child who lives with a nonparent caregiver.

Sponsors: Representatives Pettigrew, Tarleton and Macri.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repeals the statute related to income-eligibility requirements for nonparental caregivers receiving child-only Temporary Assistance for Needy Families grants.
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Hearing Date: 2/22/17

Staff: Kelci Karl-Robinson (786-7116).

Background:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federal block grant that provides temporary cash assistance, subsidized childcare, and work programs for families.

States use TANF block grants to operate their own programs. State programs differ, but operate in accordance with the following purposes set forth in federal law:

- to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives;
- to end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
- to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and
- to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

In 2011 legislation was enacted that required the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to establish income eligibility rules for nonparental caregivers receiving a TANF grant on behalf of a child, other than a foster child, who is living with the caregiver. A caregiver with

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an income above 300 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) is not eligible for child-only TANF benefits. Three hundred percent of the FPL for a family of three was \$60,480 in 2016. The DSHS counts only 50 percent of an individual's gross earned income to determine eligibility and benefit levels for TANF. Nonparental caregivers with incomes above 200 percent but less than 300 percent of the FPL may receive a reduced TANF grant according to a sliding scale.

Summary of Bill:

The means-test policy for child-only TANF grants for nonparental caregivers is repealed. Therefore, the DSHS will not evaluate the income of nonparental caregivers when conducting eligibility determinations for child-only TANF grants.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 20, 2017.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.