
Early Learning & Human Services Committee

HB 1831

Brief Description: Revising resource limitations for public assistance.

Sponsors: Representatives Pettigrew, Macri, Santos, Ortiz-Self, Frame, Kagi, Fitzgibbon, Stanford, Ormsby and Pollet.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revises exemptions for personal resources used in determining eligibility for public assistance.
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Hearing Date: 2/14/17

Staff: Dawn Eychaner (786-7135).

Background:

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Economic Services Administration administers a number of state and federally funded public assistance programs, including medical and food assistance, cash assistance, and other services. Eligibility for public assistance is generally determined based on a combination of factors for a household, including disability status, income, and resources or assets available to the applicant.

Resources available to an applicant for public assistance may be considered assets that can be applied toward meeting that person's need. The DSHS may adopt rules exempting certain resources from being counted as assets. Exempt resources must include, but are not limited to:

- a home that the applicant or his or her dependent is living in;
 - household furnishings and personal effects;
 - a motor vehicle, other than a motor home, with an equity value of no more than \$5,000;
 - a motor vehicle necessary to transport a household member with a physical disability;
- and

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- all other resources not to exceed \$1,000 or, for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), up to \$3,000 in combined savings accounts.

In addition, the DSHS may exempt resources or income that is determined necessary to the applicant's restoration to independence, to reduce the need for public assistance, or to aid in rehabilitating the applicant or a dependent of the applicant. In some cases, an applicant's non-exempt resources may reduce the assistance received or make the applicant ineligible to receive assistance.

States have the authority to determine some policies related to individuals and families receiving federal public assistance. For example, states can eliminate asset limits altogether for certain programs such as TANF.

Summary of Bill:

The exempt resources counted when determining eligibility for public assistance are revised as follows:

- a motor vehicle, other than a motor home, is exempt regardless of the value if the vehicle is used for transportation for the individual or a member of the individual's family; and
- all other resources are exempt up to any limit set by the DSHS consistent with federal requirements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 7, 2017.

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