

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1947

As Reported by House Committee On:
Housing, Human Services & Veterans

Title: An act relating to providing a monthly diaper subsidy for parents or other caregivers receiving temporary assistance for needy families.

Brief Description: Providing a monthly diaper subsidy for parents or other caregivers receiving temporary assistance for needy families.

Sponsors: Representatives Frame, Johnson, J., Berry, Fitzgibbon, Senn, Simmons, Valdez, Rule, Goodman, Thai, Dolan, Ramel, Bergquist, Shewmake, Peterson, Riccelli, Wicks, Leavitt, Callan, Slatter, Ryu, Abbarno, Ormsby, Pollet, Macri, Bateman, Taylor, Kloba and Harris-Talley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Housing, Human Services & Veterans: 1/21/22, 1/28/22 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Permits the Department of Social and Health Services to make additional monthly payments to recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families with children under the age of 3, for the purpose of child-related necessities such as diapers, subject to appropriation.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, HUMAN SERVICES & VETERANS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Peterson, Chair; Taylor, Vice Chair; Bateman, Chopp, Donaghy and Leavitt.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Caldier, Ranking Minority Member; Gilday, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff: Lena Langer (786-7192).

Background:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federal block grant that provides temporary cash assistance, subsidized childcare, and work programs for low-income households with children. The TANF program is administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

Adults in families receiving TANF participate in the WorkFirst program, which helps participants resolve barriers and prepare for and find jobs. In fiscal year 2021, the average monthly TANF caseload was 29,701, with an average payment of \$470.63, and 29.8 percent of the caseloads—13,556—included children 5 and under.

Cash and Food Assistance.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also referred to as Basic Food, provides food benefits to eligible low-income households. A household is considered categorically eligible for Basic Food when all members of the household receive, or are authorized to receive, payments or services from certain programs, or the household income is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. Families receiving TANF are categorically eligible for Basic Food. Basic Food cannot be used to purchase diapers.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Subject to appropriation, the DSHS may make additional monthly payments to recipients of TANF with children under the age of 3, for the purpose of child-related necessities such as diapers. The DSHS must set the benefit amounts in rule in accordance with the amounts appropriated.

The DSHS must make reasonable efforts to timely communicate the new subsidy at implementation and as the diaper subsidy eligibility changes.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Clarifies that the DSHS may make additional monthly payments to recipients, rather than applicants, of TANF with children under the age of 3, for the purpose of child-related necessities such as diapers. Changes the effective date of the bill from September 1, 2023, to November 1, 2023.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on November 1, 2023. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Diapers are a critical need for the health and safety of children. This additional monthly subsidy will help protect the health of babies. This is an important bill; diapers are a critical household item. For mothers receiving TANF, this bill is a lifesaver. The diaper benefit will yield better outcomes for babies and their parents. Food banks and food pantries consistently do not meet the demand for diapers. Access to diapers is critical for high-need and low-income families. When children go without frequent diaper changes, they experience a variety of detrimental health conditions, and they suffer with a lot of pain. When babies suffer, their parents suffer, too. Diapers are the most needed item; they are a necessity for babies' health.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Noel Frame, prime sponsor; Soledad Strubhar, WestSide Baby; Beth Wilson, Nurse-Family Partnership Community Advisory Board; and Katrina Johnson, Food Lifeline.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Angela Wallis; Aaron Czyzewski, Food Lifeline; Toni Sarge, WestSide Baby; Cecilia Chavez, Toppenish Community Chest Food Bank; and Marcus Braca, Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.