

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5568

AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 19, 1991

Brief Description: Addressing hunger and nutritional problems.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Roach, Stratton, Talmadge, L. Smith, Pelz, Bailey, Gaspard, Vognild, Williams, Skratek, Murray, Newhouse, McMullen, Matson, Bauer, West, L. Kreidler, A. Smith, Wojahn, Moore, Rinehart and Snyder).

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5568 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chairman; L. Smith, Vice Chairman; Stratton, and Talmadge.

Staff: Jan Sharar (786-7472)

Hearing Dates: February 19, 1991; February 27, 1991

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5568 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McDonald, Chairman; Craswell, Vice Chairman; Bailey, Bauer, Bluechel, Cantu, Gaspard, Hayner, Johnson, L. Kreidler, Metcalf, Murray, Niemi, Owen, Rinehart, Saling, L. Smith, Talmadge, West, Williams, and Wojahn.

Staff: Karen Hayes (786-7711)

Hearing Dates: March 8, 1991; March 11, 1991

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

BACKGROUND:

It is estimated that approximately 32 million Americans live below the federal poverty level. Approximately 547,000 citizens of the state of Washington, a little more than 10 percent of the population, are living below poverty level. A report by the Governor's Task Force on Hunger found that between 20 and 40 percent of these families experience severe monthly shortages, directly affecting children. Children who are hungry or malnourished are unable to function optimally in

the classroom and are thus at risk of lower achievement in school.

Not all of the mothers and infants in the state eligible for the special supplemental food program for women, infants, and children are being served by the program.

The existing network of emergency food assistance programs is unable to meet the demand for purchase, transportation, and storage of food.

Many people receiving assistance through the Emergency Food Assistance Program have special nutritional needs which are not met. These people include infants and children with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women, adults with chronic diseases, etc.

People facing severe hunger often have to wait several days before their food stamp assistance is approved by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

The United States Department of Agriculture authorizes several food programs, including the School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, the Summer Feeding Program, and Child and Adult Day Care Feeding Programs. Many communities do not participate in these programs which results in eligible persons being denied the nutritional benefits others receive in participating localities.

Federal law allows states to exempt child support as income in determining food stamp need and eligibility. If a state chooses to use this exemption, both the number of eligible persons increases and the financial responsibility of the state increases by paying for the difference.

SUMMARY:

The number of eligible women and children served by the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children is increased.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program is expanded to provide additional support for the operation of food banks, food distribution programs, and tribal voucher programs for the purchase, transportation, and storage of food. Food for persons with special nutritional needs and training for food bank staff about these needs is increased.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is directed to issue food stamps to eligible persons within 24 hours of application. DSHS is directed to exclude child support as income in determining eligibility for food stamps.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is directed to aggressively solicit eligible schools, child and adult day care centers, and other organizations to participate in the nutrition programs authorized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Superintendent of Public

Instruction is also directed to: provide start-up funds for school breakfast programs; provide funds to start or restart school lunch programs; provide an additional 10 cents per meal reimbursement for all meals served to children at the schools; establish a marketing, promotion, education, and training program for use by all child nutrition programs; assist programs with compliance to USDA guidelines; allocate and administer national nutrition education training funds; and coordinate with other organizations to develop a media campaign to educate the public about child nutrition programs.

The Senate Children and Family Services Committee and the House Human Services Committee are directed to conduct an interim study on nutrition needs of specific groups of persons.

Program expansions for women, infants and children (WIC) vouchers; emergency food banks; school-based meals and 24-hour expedited food stamps are each made contingent upon funding in the budget.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

Effective Date: July 1, 1991

TESTIMONY FOR:

Children without enough food tend to be inattentive and disruptive in school. Their motor and cognitive skills do not develop normally. The lower the price the higher the participation in the subsidized programs. With federal commodities cutbacks additional state support more important. Food banks are the grass roots way to deal with hunger.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

The department cannot support the measure because funds are not provided for this purpose in the Governor's budget. The department will continue efforts to speed up the issuance of food stamps to eligible families.

TESTIFIED (Children & Family Services): PRO: Kathleen Clarke, Board of Citizens for a Hunger Free Washington; Sharon Worghum, Dir., Food Services North Thurston School District; Donna Oberg, Heather Inouye, Ceola Fowler, WIC; Tony Lee, WA Assn. of Churches; David Ottey, NW Reg. Food Network; Betty Marcelynas, Child Nutrition OSPI; Pat Wendler, Vicki Levenberger, John Froyd, Food Banks; Margaret Casey, Childrens' Budget Coalition; Pat Wendler, Spokane Food Bank; Bernice Morehead, DSHS; Carol Felton, DSHS

TESTIFIED (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Pam Roach, prime sponsor; Margaret Casey, Anti-Hunger Coalition; Tony Lee, WA Association of Churches; Sue Hutchins, WA Association of Local WIC Agencies; Stephanie Hamilton, WIC participant; CON: Bernice Moorehead, DSHS; Carol Felton, DSHS

HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):

The exclusion of child support payments from income when determining food stamp eligibility is removed. The office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is not required to: provide startup for school breakfast and lunch programs; provide an additional ten cents per meal for school served meals; assist child nutrition programs; administer national education training funds; and develop a media campaign to educate the public about child nutrition programs.