

SENATE BILL REPORT

SCR 8405

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES,
APRIL 4, 1991

Brief Description: Establishing a joint task force to develop a public assistance plan.

SPONSORS: Senators McDonald, Anderson, Johnson, Matson, Craswell, Roach, Cantu, Thorsness, Oke and McCaslin.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

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

Minority Report: Do not pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Stratton and Talmadge.

Staff: Jan Sharar (786-7747)

Hearing Dates: April 1, 1991; April 4, 1991

BACKGROUND:

In an effort to end the cycle of poverty, the Legislature adopted the Family Independence Program (FIP). FIP was implemented in 1987. The first eight FIP sites were opened in July 1988 and an additional three were opened in October of 1988. Also in October of 1988, Congress passed a national welfare reform program known as the Family Support Act (FSA). By July of 1989, 15 FIP sites were opened. The FSA transition benefits requirements were implemented a year later and ten FIP sites were frozen in May of 1990 due to costs exceeding available funding. The federal Job Opportunities and Basic Skills program (JOBS) is implemented in the non-FIP sites and the frozen FIP sites.

SUMMARY:

A task force is created to develop a new statewide "workfare" program. The task force is composed of legislators, business persons, a public assistance expert, an individual with experience in self-sufficiency and employability training and chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services.

By December 1, 1991, the joint task force shall develop and submit to the Governor and the Legislature a written plan for implementation of a public assistance system that emphasizes suitable job placement, training and job search to achieve long-term self-sufficiency. The system must conform with

applicable federal law, regulations and performance standards and maximize the receipt of federal funds.

The task force is also charged with: considering requirements for government or community work experience as a condition of receipt of benefits under Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); consideration of requiring parents ensure the regular school attendance of their children to continue full receipt of AFDC benefits; and examination of the relative tradeoffs among varying grant levels and the cost of providing specific support services. Contents of the written implementation plan are enumerated.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:

The plan shall not interfere with the Family Independence Program (FIP) which is authorized through June 30, 1993.

TESTIMONY FOR:

Incorporates what is working in FIP into the plan. The goal is self-sufficiency. The plan would likely serve more people than FIP.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

This plan would be the same as "workfare" which has received bad reviews. We need to give serious consideration to the future of FIP and JOBS.

TESTIFIED: Senator Dan McDonald (pro); CON: Rick Allen, FIP Advisory Board; Jean Soliz, Governor's Office; Mary Murphy, League of Women Voters; Jean Colman; Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition; Norleen Koponen, NOW; Patricia Lee, Asian/American Affairs Commission; Peter Berliner, Children's Budget; Steve Lansing, Lutheran Public Policy Office; Tony Lee, Ned Dolesjisi, WA State Catholic Conference; Ann Simons, WA Women United; Andrew Rodriguez, WA Commission on Hispanic Affairs; Barbara Baker, Legal Services; Connie Johns-Brown, National Assn. of Social Workers