

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 3022

As Reported By House Committee On:

Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to interstate agreements for public assistance cross matches.

Brief Description: Authorizing interstate agreements for public assistance cross matches.

Sponsors: Representative Boldt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/5/98, 2/6/98 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Cooke, Chairman; Boldt, Vice Chairman; Bush, Vice Chairman; Tokuda, Ranking Minority Member; Kastama, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ballasiotes; Carrell; Dickerson; Gombosky; McDonald and Wolfe.

Staff: Douglas Ruth (786-7134).

Background: As with the old Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, the possibility exists under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program for grant recipients to fraudulently collect grants simultaneously from two states. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) attempts to verify the residency of each applicant for assistance through searching Employment Security's database, and other agency records. However, it is still difficult for any one case worker to identify schemes to collect simultaneous grants. At present, the department's verification efforts do not include comparing the names of persons receiving public assistance in Washington with the names of public assistance recipients in other states. The department estimates that it would cost \$25,000 to develop such a cross-matching program with neighboring states.

Summary of Bill: The department is directed to take reasonable efforts to enter into agreements with neighboring states to conduct interstate cross matches. The department is authorized to enter into such agreements. The department will report to the Children and Family Services Committee their progress toward entering into any interstate agreements by July, 1999.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: This bill is in response to recommendations of an interstate fraud task force that met during the interim. The task force was composed of officials from Washington, Idaho and Oregon. The Department of Social and Health Services is currently pursuing cross-matching agreements with Idaho, Oregon and Montana. They expect to have an agreement with these states by spring 1998. The DSHS department will continue to support efforts to identify fraud, and this bill is consistent with those efforts.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: March Boldt, prime sponsor; and John Atherton, Department of Social and Health Services (pro with information).