
Children & Family Services Committee

BILL ANALYSIS HB 2900

Title: An act relating to pro rata calculation of temporary assistance for needy families grants.

Brief Description: Providing for pro rata calculation of temporary assistance for needy families grants.

Sponsors: Representatives Cooke, Ballasiotes, McDonald, Boldt and Mitchell.

Meeting Date: January 27, 1998.

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Doug Ruth (786-7134).

Background: In the 1997 session, the legislature created the WorkFirst program. The program is intended to assist recipients of TANF to move from public assistance to unsubsidized employment. In conformity with the federal welfare law that created the TANF block grant, participants in the program are required to perform work activities as a condition of receiving assistance. A specified number of hours of work are required to be completed by each recipient each month. As an incentive for the recipient to find full-time work, half of a recipient's earnings per month are not counted against the family's grant level.

Another incentive provision under the program is sanctions that may be imposed if a recipient refuses to perform the required number of hours of work activities. The penalty for failing to meet the work requirement is reduction of the family's grant by the recipient's share, or termination of the grant altogether, subject to good cause exceptions.

The federal welfare law also gives the states the option of using a pro rata sanction. This sanction reduces the recipient's grant by the percentage of the hourly work requirement he or she did not fulfill during the month.

Summary of Bill: The department is required to calculate grants according to a pro rata calculation by July 1, 1999. By that date, recipients of TANF must receive only the proportion of their grant that corresponds with the portion of required work hours they completed in the prior month.

In the mean time, the department is required to study the practical application and fiscal impact of implementing a pro rata calculation of grants. The department must report to the legislature by November 30, 1998.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: None requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Rep. Suzette Cooke, Chair
Rep. Marc Boldt, Vice Chair
Rep. Roger Bush, Vice Chair
Rep. Kip Tokuda*
Rep. Jim Kastama**
Rep. Ida Ballasiotes

Rep. Mike Carrell
Rep. Mary Lou Dickerson
Rep. Jeff Gombosky
Rep. Joyce McDonald
Rep. Cathy Wolfe