

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## ESB 6098

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Relating to human services.

**Sponsors:** Senator West.

**Background:** The federal Welfare Reform Act (P.L. 104-193) disqualifies legal immigrants from many forms of public assistance. Each state may decide whether or not to provide immigrants with benefits. Generally, public assistance for immigrants must be paid for with state, rather than federal funds.

**Summary:** Washington State exercises its option under the federal act to continue to make public assistance available to legal immigrants. Types of assistance include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Medicaid and social services block grant programs. For legal immigrants arriving after federal enactment (August 22, 1996), assistance is limited to families in which the parent or legal guardian resides in Washington for one year prior to application for assistance.

Legal immigrants losing Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are immediately eligible for the General Assistance-Unemployable Program.

Federal sponsor deeming requirements apply to legal immigrants for a period of five years, but are waived if the sponsor dies or is permanently incapacitated during the deeming period.

The Department of Social and Health Services may establish a food assistance program for legal immigrants meeting the eligibility standards for federal food stamps.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	48 0
House	97 0

**Effective:** July 27, 1997