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HOUSE BILL 1021

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State of Washington

55th Legislature

1997 Regular Session

By Representatives Boldt, Koster, Lambert, Schoesler, Sterk, Mulliken, Sherstad, Carrell, L. Thomas, Cooke, Bush, Smith, Dunn, Mielke, Cairnes, O'Brien and Backlund

Read first time 01/13/97. Referred to Committee on Children & Family Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to suspension of public assistance payments;  
2 amending RCW 74.08.290; and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that those individuals  
5 who abuse and defraud the welfare system not only steal scarce  
6 resources, but also perpetuate myths about people on public assistance.  
7 The taxpayers of this state have limited resources with which to help  
8 those in need and it is imperative that the legislature use its  
9 authority to ensure that those resources are assisting the truly needy.  
10 People who are caught abusing public trust by defrauding the  
11 welfare system should be punished and not allowed to receive public  
12 assistance.

13 **Sec. 2.** RCW 74.08.290 and 1995 c 379 s 2 are each amended to read  
14 as follows:

15 (1) The department is hereby authorized to suspend ((temporarily))  
16 the public assistance granted to any person ((for any period during  
17 which such person is not in need thereof)).

1       (2) If a recipient is convicted of any crime or offense, and  
2 punished by imprisonment, no payment shall be made during the period of  
3 imprisonment.

4       ~~((If a recipient is convicted of unlawful practices under RCW~~  
5 ~~74.08.331, no payment shall be made for a period to be determined by~~  
6 ~~the court, but in no event less than six months upon the first~~  
7 ~~conviction and no less than twelve months for a second or subsequent~~  
8 ~~violation. This suspension of public assistance shall apply regardless~~  
9 ~~of whether the recipient is subject to complete or partial confinement~~  
10 ~~upon conviction, or incurs some lesser penalty.))~~

11       (3)(a) If an applicant for or recipient of public assistance  
12 intentionally provides a false or misleading statement or commits an  
13 act, which statement or act is designed to misrepresent, conceal, or  
14 withhold facts for the purpose of establishing or maintaining  
15 eligibility for public assistance or for the purpose of increasing, or  
16 preventing a reduction in, the amount of a grant, the applicant or  
17 recipient is in violation of this subsection (3)(a) and is subject to  
18 the penalties provided in (b) of this subsection.

19       (b) An individual who is found to have committed a violation of (a)  
20 of this subsection by a state administrative law judge or by a state  
21 court or federal court is ineligible for continued public assistance  
22 for the following periods:

- 23       (i) Six months for the first violation;  
24       (ii) Twelve months for the second violation; and  
25       (iii) Permanently for the third violation.

26       For the purpose of applying these penalties, numerous violations on  
27 a single application, or in a single statement, made by an individual  
28 count as one violation.

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