

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1635

---

---

As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Children & Family Services & Corrections, April 4, 2003

**Title:** An act relating to income and resources reporting requirements under the public assistance program.

**Brief Description:** Revising reporting requirements for income and resources under the public assistance program.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Pettigrew, Boldt, Kagi, Edwards and Kenney; by request of Department of Social and Health Services.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Children & Family Services & Corrections: 4/2/03, 4/4/03 [DPA].

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Stevens, Chair; Carlson, Deccio, Hargrove, McAuliffe and Regala.

**Staff:** Edith Rice (786-7444)

**Background:** Public assistance recipients are required to notify the Department of Social and Health Services within 20 days, if they receive benefits they are not entitled to, or in an amount greater than that for which they are eligible. The overpayment becomes a debt due the department. If a recipient fails to report income or makes false statements, the state can recover the overpayment and file criminal charges.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** The requirement that recipients notify the department within 20 days is removed. Recipients must report changes in resources or income which they believe would make them ineligible to receive benefits by the 10th of the month following the change. The department must notify the recipient regarding eligibility within 30 days or forfeit the right to collect the overpayment to the recipient. The department is permitted to establish reporting requirements regarding countable income consistent with federal law and regulations governing public assistance.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The striking amendment clarifies that recipients of cash or food benefits are to report changes in resources or income which they believe would make them ineligible for the benefits, by the 10th of the month following the change. If the department does not notify the recipient regarding eligibility within 30 days, the department forfeits the right to collect the overpayment.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** Reporting will now be simpler for clients as well as the department. Fewer errors on the part of the department will mean the department will be less likely to be sanctioned by the federal government. Sanctions could amount to millions of dollars. More and more of the working poor are coming to depend on food assistance in particular.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** (original bill) Liz Dunbar, Deputy Secretary, Department of Social and Health Services (pro); Tony Lee, Fremont Public Association (pro); Bob Cooper, Food Lifeline (pro).