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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 3141**

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**State of Washington**

**61st Legislature**

**2010 Regular Session**

**By** House Early Learning & Children's Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Kagi, Pettigrew, Seaquist, Kenney, and Ormsby)

READ FIRST TIME 02/03/10.

1           AN ACT Relating to redesigning the delivery of temporary assistance  
2 for needy families; amending RCW 74.08A.285; adding new sections to  
3 chapter 74.08A RCW; adding a new section to chapter 43.215 RCW; and  
4 repealing RCW 74.08A.200.

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

6           NEW SECTION.   **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 74.08A RCW  
7 to read as follows:

8           (1) The legislature finds that promoting meaningful change in the  
9 lives of needy families requires a thoughtful and creative approach to  
10 matching available resources with families' needs and developing a  
11 comprehensive plan to assist the family in attaining lasting self-  
12 sufficiency.

13           (2) The legislature further finds that policies to encourage the  
14 completion of appropriate educational and training programs result in  
15 more parents attaining living wage jobs, and more families becoming  
16 economically self-sufficient so that they may leave public financial  
17 assistance programs permanently.

18           (3) The legislature also finds that ample research demonstrates

1 that the completion of at least forty-five college credits, resulting  
2 in a credential or certificate, is often critical to achieving self-  
3 sufficiency.

4 (4) Research also demonstrates that without adequate levels of  
5 education or training, job search activities alone have no measurable  
6 impact on a family's ability to become and remain economically self-  
7 sufficient.

8 (5) The legislature also finds that while many families have been  
9 successful in permanently leaving the program of temporary assistance  
10 for needy families, statistics indicate that families continue to  
11 return to the program in the absence of adequate education and  
12 training.

13 (6) The legislature also finds that a primary purpose of the  
14 temporary assistance for needy families program is to enable parents to  
15 work, and therefore, the legislature intends to assure that subsidized  
16 employment in the community jobs program will be available to parents  
17 who are unable to find employment after earnest efforts at job search  
18 or education and training activities.

19 (7) The legislature recognizes that federal law exempts certain  
20 parents from training or work requirements due to a disability,  
21 including caring for a disabled child. The legislature intends that  
22 these parents and children also must be supported with appropriate  
23 services.

24 (8) In order to provide work opportunities for parents with  
25 significant barriers to employment, the legislature also intends to  
26 build upon the successes of the community jobs program.

27 (9) The legislature recognizes the vital importance of early  
28 childhood development and the significant developmental risks presented  
29 for children living in low-income households, particularly during  
30 critical developmental stages. Therefore, the legislature intends to  
31 reform components of Washington's subsidized childcare program by  
32 redesigning the eligibility determination process to promote: (a)  
33 Stability for children and (b) predictability for parents who are  
34 either working or preparing and searching for work and the childcare  
35 providers who are serving low-income families.

36 (10) The legislature intends, through the implementation of this  
37 act, to: (a) Infuse new energy into efforts to improve the well-being  
38 of low-income families through education and training opportunities

1 that will lead to sustainable economic self-sufficiency for families  
2 and (b) help alleviate the effects of poverty on Washington's children,  
3 particularly those experiencing significant poverty during critical  
4 stages of their development.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.215 RCW  
6 to read as follows:

7 (1) The department shall establish and implement policies in the  
8 working connections child care program to promote stability and quality  
9 of care for children from low-income households. Policies for the  
10 expenditure of funds constituting the working connections child care  
11 program must be consistent with the outcome measures defined in RCW  
12 74.08A.410 and the standards established in this section intended to  
13 promote continuity of care for children.

14 (2) Eligibility determinations and authorizations for working  
15 connections subsidies must be effective for twelve months unless a  
16 parent or child care provider reports a change in circumstances  
17 necessitating reauthorization prior to the end of the twelve-month  
18 period. This requirement must be introduced gradually, as follows:

19 (a) Beginning in fiscal year 2011, a twelve-month authorization  
20 takes effect for parents with children enrolled in an early childhood  
21 education and assistance program, a head start program, or an early  
22 head start program; and

23 (b) Beginning in fiscal year 2013, a twelve-month authorization  
24 takes effect for all other parents receiving a working connections  
25 subsidy.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 74.08A RCW  
27 to read as follows:

28 The Washington WorkFirst subcabinet, in consultation with the  
29 governor, shall:

30 (1) Reevaluate the structure of the WorkFirst program in the  
31 context of legislative intent expressed in section 1 of this act, and  
32 in consideration of the relevant research relating to family economic  
33 self-sufficiency and adequate training and education programs;

34 (2) Develop a proposal for redesigning the state's use of temporary  
35 assistance for needy families funds in a manner that makes optimum use

1 of all funds available in the state to promote more families moving out  
2 of poverty to sustainable self-sufficiency; and

3 (3) Report the proposal to the appropriate committees of the  
4 legislature by December 1, 2010.

5 **Sec. 4.** RCW 74.08A.285 and 2003 c 383 s 3 are each amended to read  
6 as follows:

7 The WorkFirst program operated by the department to meet the  
8 federal work requirements specified in P.L. 104-193 shall contain a job  
9 search component. The component shall consist of instruction on how to  
10 secure a job and assisted job search activities to locate and retain  
11 employment. Nonexempt recipients of temporary assistance for needy  
12 families shall participate in an initial job search for no more than  
13 twelve consecutive weeks, when appropriate, given the recipient's  
14 marketable job skills, attachment to the labor force, and level of  
15 education or training. Each recipient shall receive a work skills  
16 assessment upon referral to the job search program. The work skills  
17 assessment shall include but not be limited to education, employment  
18 history, employment strengths, and job skills. The recipient's ability  
19 to obtain employment will be reviewed periodically thereafter and, if  
20 it is clear at any time that further participation in a job search will  
21 not be productive, the department shall assess the recipient pursuant  
22 to RCW 74.08A.260. The department shall refer recipients unable to  
23 find employment through the initial job search period to ((work))  
24 activities that will develop their skills or knowledge to make them  
25 more employable, including additional job search and job readiness  
26 assistance.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** RCW 74.08A.200 (Intent--Washington  
28 WorkFirst) and 1997 c 58 s 301 are each repealed.

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