

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6153

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As of January 18, 2012

**Title:** An act relating to school attendance of children whose parents or guardians receive state assistance.

**Brief Description:** Regarding school attendance of children whose parents or guardians receive state assistance.

**Sponsors:** Senators McAuliffe and Chase.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Human Services & Corrections: 1/17/12.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

**Staff:** Jennifer Strus (786-7316)

**Background:** There are a variety of programs offering various forms of state assistance, cash and otherwise, to individuals and families who qualify. Eligibility requirements for each program are different, but most of the programs are needs-based. Some examples of state assistance programs include: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; the Aged, Blind, and Disabled Program; the Housing and Essential Needs Program; and State Food Assistance. No state assistance program has an eligibility requirement that ensures the children of the assistance recipient attend school.

**Summary of Bill:** The Department of Social and Health Services must review the rules of all programs that provide state assistance and require that recipients of state assistance who are parents or guardians of a school-aged child or whose child receives state assistance ensure that the child is attending school on a regular basis. Failure to do so renders the recipient ineligible to receive assistance unless such a requirement would jeopardize the receipt of federal funding.

Recipients who homeschool their child may demonstrate that they comply with the school attendance requirement by showing that they have filed the annual Declaration of Intent for a Student to Receive Home-Based Instruction for the relevant year.

**Appropriation:** None.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 16, 2012.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill is to make sure that parents and their school-aged children are following the compulsory school attendance law in this state.

CON: This bill would make it harder for parents to get their kids to school by removing the resources parents need to keep their kids in school. This bill is not the solution to compulsory school attendance law violations. The bill would have the opposite effect of its intended goal.

OTHER: Support the idea that children should be in school, but this bill is not the way to go about it. It is not fair to call out kids who have the misfortune to have families on public assistance. There is not proof that compulsory school attendance is a particular problem within the public assistance population.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator McAuliffe, prime sponsor.

CON: Bob Cooper, WA Defender Assn.; Robin Zukoski, Columbia Legal Services.

OTHER: Lonnie Johns-Brown, National Organization of Women.