
**Early Learning & Human Services
Committee**

HB 2874

Brief Description: Repealing certain provisions governing income eligibility for temporary assistance for needy families benefits.

Sponsors: Representatives Pettigrew, Walsh, Sawyer, Senn, Kagi, Stanford, Bergquist, Ortiz-Self, Gregerson and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Repeals the statute related to means-testing for child-only Temporary Assistance for Needy Families grants, which removes the income-eligibility requirements for non-parental caregivers.

Hearing Date: 2/2/16

Staff: Ashley Paintner (786-7120).

Background:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federal block grant established under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. States use TANF block grants to operate their own programs. State programs differ, but they operate in accordance to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives, and to end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation and work.

In 2011 the Legislature passed ESSB 5921, which directed the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to establish income eligibility rules for non-parental caregivers receiving a child-only TANF grant. A caregiver with an income above 300 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) is not eligible for child-only TANF benefits for a child who is not a foster child. Three hundred percent of the FPL for a family of three was \$60,270 in 2015. The DSHS counts

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only 50 percent of an individual's gross earned income to determine eligibility and benefit level. Non-parental caregivers between 200 and 300 percent of the FPL receive a reduced TANF grant. The stated purpose for this exemption is to encourage recipients to work.

Summary of Bill:

The means-test policy for child-only TANF grants is repealed. Therefore, the DSHS will not evaluate the income of non-parental caregivers when conducting eligibility determinations for child-only TANF grants.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 27, 2016.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.