

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5838

As of January 21, 2022

Title: An act relating to providing a monthly diaper subsidy for parents or other caregivers receiving temporary assistance for needy families.

Brief Description: Providing a monthly diaper subsidy for parents or other caregivers receiving temporary assistance for needy families.

Sponsors: Senators Nobles, Rivers, Das, Frockt, Hasegawa, Hunt, Kuderer, Lovelett, Nguyen, Robinson, Saldaña, Stanford, Trudeau and Wilson, C..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation: 1/21/22.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that households receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families with children under the age of three may receive an additional monthly payment by the Department of Social Health Services to assist with child-related necessities, such as diapers, subject to appropriation.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, REENTRY & REHABILITATION

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7488)

Background: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) provides cash grants for families in need. In addition to needy families, persons caring for a child who is not their own biologically or by addition, for example, a relative's child, as a legal guardian, or acting in the place of a parent, are also able to apply for TANF benefits on behalf of that child. Adults in families receiving TANF participate in the WorkFirst program, which helps participants resolve barriers and prepare for and find jobs. In fiscal year 2021, the average monthly TANF caseload was 29, 701 representing 69.672 clients, with an average payment of \$470.63, and 29.8 percent of the caseloads—13,556—included children five and under.

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

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): Subject to appropriation, to assist with child-related necessities such as diapers, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) may make additional monthly payments to recipient applicants with children under the age of three who are otherwise eligible for and receiving TANF. DSHS is to set the benefit amount in rule in alignment with funds appropriated for this purpose. DSHS is to make reasonable efforts to ensure timely communication to families of the new subsidy at implementation and as diaper eligibility changes.

Appropriation: The bill contains a null and void clause requiring specific funding be provided in an omnibus appropriation act.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 12, 2022.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on September 1, 2023.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony On Proposed Substitute: PRO: This bill is fondly referred to as the "Diaper Needs Act," addressing the fact the cost of diapers has outpaced inflation, and causes more stressors for working families. This can also be thought of as an economic development tool, as many early childhood programs require diapers for attendance. If you can't afford diapers, you can't send your child to daycare and go to work. Last session there was a proviso to provide grants for diaper banks. The need far outpaces the capacity for the funding. Also, diaper banks don't exist in all parts of the state and some families may be embarrassed to go to a diaper bank. Diaper needs are really overlooked as there are no public assistance programs to pay for this need. This issue is compounded as those in most need are disproportionately the BIPOC community. There is no cheap way to diaper a baby. And re-using or extending the use of a diaper has health costs to the baby, not just a rash but other more serious medical conditions, not to mention the stress of the parent.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator T'wina Nobles, Prime Sponsor; Claire Lane, Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition; Lianna Kressin, Statewide Poverty Action Network; Beth Wilson, Nurse-Family Partnership Community Advisory Board; Soledad Strubhar, WestSide Baby; Toni Sarge, WestSide Baby; Aleah Patulot, Catholic Community Services, Pregnancy and Parenting Support Program; Darrell Powell, NAACP Alaska, Oregon and Washington State Region; Resha Clark, Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics; Marcus Braca, Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics; Jim Buchanan, Washington State African American Cannabis Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.