



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 480

February Session, 2000

Senate Bill No. 118

Senate, April 10, 2000

The Committee on Appropriations reported through SEN. CRISCO of the 17th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

An Act Allowing The Pass Along Of Federal Cost-Of-Living Adjustments For Recipients Of The State Supplement To The Federal Supplemental Security Income Program.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 17b-106 of the general statutes, as
2 amended by section 7 of public act 99-279, is repealed and the
3 following is substituted in lieu thereof:

4 (a) On July 1, 1985, the Commissioner of Social Services shall
5 increase the adult payment standards for the state supplement to the
6 federal Supplemental Security Income Program by four and
7 three-tenths per cent over the standards for the fiscal year ending June
8 30, 1985, provided the commissioner shall apply the appropriate
9 disregards. Notwithstanding the provisions of any regulation to the
10 contrary, effective July 1, 1994, the commissioner shall reduce the
11 appropriate unearned income disregard for recipients of the state
12 supplement to the federal Supplemental Security Income Program by

13 seven per cent, provided if sufficient funds are available within
 14 accounts in the Department of Social Services and are transferred to
 15 the old age assistance account, the aid to the blind account and the aid
 16 to the disabled account, the commissioner shall increase the unearned
 17 income disregard for recipients of the state supplement to the federal
 18 Supplemental Security Income Program to a level not to exceed that in
 19 effect on June 30, 1994. On July 1, 1989, and annually thereafter, the
 20 Commissioner of Social Services shall increase the adult payment
 21 standards over those of the previous fiscal year for the state
 22 supplement to the federal Supplemental Security Income Program by
 23 the percentage increase, if any, in the most recent calendar year
 24 average in the consumer price index for urban consumers over the
 25 average for the previous calendar year, provided the annual increase,
 26 if any, shall not exceed five per cent, except that the adult payment
 27 standards for the fiscal years ending June 30, 1993, June 30, 1994, June
 28 30, 1995, June 30, 1996, June 30, 1997, June 30, 1998, June 30, 1999, June
 29 30, 2000, and June 30, 2001, shall not be increased. Effective October 1,
 30 1991, the coverage of excess utility costs for recipients of the state
 31 supplement to the federal Supplemental Security Income Program is
 32 eliminated. On and after July 1, 2000, the commissioner shall increase
 33 the unearned income disregard for recipients of the state supplement
 34 to the federal Supplemental Security Income Program by an amount
 35 equal to the annual cost-of-living increase provided under the federal
 36 Supplemental Security Income Program.

37 Sec. 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2000.

HS Committee Vote: Yea 18 Nay 0 JF C/R APP
APP Committee Vote: Yea 47 Nay 0 JF

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: Significant Cost

Affected Agencies: Department of Social Services

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation**State Impact:**

Individuals enrolled in the Supplemental Assistance programs must have another source of income, such as Social Security, to qualify for supplemental assistance. Under the current Connecticut program, whenever a recipient of supplemental assistance is granted a cost of living adjustment (COLA) in their Social Security benefit, the amount by which their Federal benefit has increased is deducted from the amount of their monthly supplemental assistance check. This bill would increase the unearned income disregard for recipients, of Supplemental Assistance, thereby allowing recipients to retain their federal COLA's. This change is expected to cost \$1.6 million in FY01, with an annualized cost of \$3.2 million. Neither the House nor the Senate version of the Appropriations Act includes funds for this change.

OLR Bill Analysis

SB 118

AN ACT ALLOWING THE PASS ALONG OF FEDERAL COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS FOR RECIPIENTS OF THE STATE SUPPLEMENT TO THE FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME PROGRAM.**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioner to annually increase the "unearned income disregard" in the State Supplement Program (SSP) by the same amount federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits rise as a result of cost of living adjustments. This disregard is one of several deductions allowed under the SSP.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2000

BACKGROUND***State Supplement and Disregards***

The SSP provides cash assistance to people receiving SSI benefits who are aged, blind, or disabled. Individuals who are not SSI recipients may also qualify. The gross monthly income is currently \$1,536 (three times the maximum SSI benefit). Assets can be no more than \$1,600 for single applicants and \$2,400 for married couples.

SSP benefits are determined by looking at an applicant's countable income and comparing it to his "needs." Countable income is combined earned and unearned income, minus earned and unearned income "disregards" and impairment-related work expenses. The unearned income disregards are: (1) \$250.90 for people sharing housing with a non-relative, (2) \$183 for someone living alone in the community, and (3) \$90.70 for someone living in a licensed boarding arrangement, such as a residential care home.

For someone living in the community, need is calculated by taking the

amount of the person's rent (which can be no more than \$400 for someone living alone or \$200 for someone in shared housing) and adding a personal needs allowance of \$164.10.

If countable income is less than the need, the person qualifies and the difference between the two is the benefit amount.

Related Bill

HB 5252, favorably reported to the House floor on March 27, requires the DSS commissioner to establish a pilot program that will provide extra benefits to people with severe physical disabilities who (1) are eligible for or receive SSP benefits and (2) share housing with a non-relative who provides them with transfer assistance.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Change of Reference

Yea 18 Nay 0

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Report

Yea 47 Nay 0