



General Assembly

**Substitute Bill No. 554**

February Session, 2004

\* SB00554HS\_APP031604 \*

**AN ACT CONCERNING TECHNICAL REVISIONS TO THE  
TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

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

1 Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 17b-688c of the general statutes is  
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
3 *1, 2004*):

4 (a) The Department of Social Services shall administer, in  
5 accordance with sections 17b-688h, as amended, and 17b-688i, an  
6 employment services program for the purpose of providing  
7 employment services to recipients of benefits under the temporary  
8 assistance for needy families program pursuant to Title IV-A of the  
9 Social Security Act. Said program shall include the provision of  
10 employment services to recipients of temporary family assistance that  
11 will enable them to become employed and independent of cash  
12 assistance within twenty-one months of receipt of temporary family  
13 assistance.

14 (b) The commissioner shall, to the extent permitted by federal law:  
15 (1) Permit the maximum number of temporary family assistance  
16 recipients to satisfy federally defined work activity requirements  
17 through participation in educational activities that are directed toward  
18 the attainment of a high school diploma or its equivalent or vocational  
19 education training, and (2) include educational activities as an activity

20 that counts toward the first twenty hours of participation in federally  
21 defined work activities for temporary family assistance recipients. Not  
22 later than July 1, 2005, and annually thereafter, the commissioner shall  
23 report, in accordance with section 11-4a, to the council established  
24 pursuant to section 17b-28 on the number of temporary family  
25 assistance recipients who satisfy work activity requirements through  
26 participation in educational activities.

27 [(b)] (c) The Department of Social Services shall reduce the benefits  
28 awarded to a family under the temporary family assistance program  
29 when a member of the family who is required to participate in  
30 employment services fails to comply with an employment services  
31 requirement without good cause. The first instance of noncompliance  
32 with an employment services requirement shall result in a twenty-five  
33 per cent reduction of such benefits for three consecutive months. The  
34 second instance of noncompliance with such requirement shall result  
35 in a thirty-five per cent reduction of such benefits for three consecutive  
36 months. A third or subsequent instance of noncompliance with such  
37 requirement shall result in the termination of such benefits for three  
38 consecutive months. If only one member of a family is eligible for  
39 temporary family assistance and such member fails to comply with an  
40 employment services requirement, the department shall terminate all  
41 benefits of such family for three consecutive months. Notwithstanding  
42 the provisions of this subsection, the department shall terminate the  
43 benefits awarded to a family under the temporary family assistance  
44 program if a member of the family who is not exempt from the twenty-  
45 one-month time limit specified in subsection (a) of section 17b-112, as  
46 amended, fails, without good cause, to: (1) Attend any scheduled  
47 assessment appointment or interview relating to the establishment of  
48 an employment services plan, except that such individual's benefits  
49 shall be reinstated if the individual attends a subsequently scheduled  
50 appointment or interview within thirty days of the date on which the  
51 department has issued notification to the individual that benefits have  
52 been terminated, or (2) comply with an employment services  
53 requirement during a six-month extension of benefits. Any individual

54 who fails to comply with the provisions of subdivision (1) of this  
55 subsection may submit a new application for such benefits at any time  
56 after termination of benefits.

57 [(c)] (d) The Department of Social Services shall not enter into or  
58 renew any contractual obligations for the employment services  
59 program that extend beyond June 30, 1998. Within fifteen days after  
60 execution of such contractual obligations, the Department of Social  
61 Services shall send to the Labor Department a copy of such contracts  
62 for the information of the Labor Department.

63 [(d)] (e) The Commissioner of Social Services shall implement  
64 policies and procedures necessary to carry out the purposes of this  
65 section while in the process of adopting such policies and procedures  
66 in regulation form, provided notice is published in the Connecticut  
67 Law Journal within twenty days of implementation of such policies  
68 and procedures. Policies and procedures implemented pursuant to this  
69 section shall be valid until the time final regulations are effective.

70 Sec. 2. Subsection (c) of section 17b-112 of the general statutes, as  
71 amended by section 13 of public act 03-2, section 1 of public act 03-28  
72 and section 5 of public act 03-268, is repealed and the following is  
73 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2004*):

74 (c) A family who is subject to time-limited benefits may petition the  
75 Commissioner of Social Services for six-month extensions of such  
76 benefits. The commissioner shall grant not more than [two] three  
77 extensions to such family who has made a good faith effort to comply  
78 with the requirements of the program and despite such effort has a  
79 total family income at a level below the payment standard, or has  
80 encountered circumstances preventing employment including, but not  
81 limited to: (1) Domestic violence or physical harm to such family's  
82 children; (2) such family resides in an area of high unemployment, or  
83 [(2)] (3) other circumstances beyond such family's control. For  
84 purposes of this subsection, "area of high unemployment" means that  
85 at the time an application for an extension of benefits is made, the

86 applicant resides in a labor market area which has a rate of  
87 unemployment that exceeds one hundred ten per cent of the average  
88 rate of unemployment in the state, as determined by the Labor  
89 Department. The commissioner shall disregard ninety dollars of  
90 earned income in determining applicable family income. The  
91 commissioner may grant a subsequent six-month extension if each  
92 adult in the family meets one or more of the following criteria: (A) The  
93 adult is precluded from engaging in employment activities due to  
94 domestic violence or another reason beyond the adult's control; (B) the  
95 adult has two or more substantiated barriers to employment including,  
96 but not limited to, the lack of available child care, substance abuse or  
97 addiction, severe mental or physical health problems, one or more  
98 severe learning disabilities, domestic violence or a child who has a  
99 serious physical or behavioral health problem; (C) the adult is working  
100 thirty-five or more hours per week, is earning at least the minimum  
101 wage and continues to earn less than the family's temporary family  
102 assistance payment standard; or (D) the adult is employed and works  
103 less than thirty-five hours per week due to (i) a documented medical  
104 impairment that limits the adult's hours of employment, provided the  
105 adult works the maximum number of hours that the medical condition  
106 permits, or (ii) the need to care for a disabled member of the adult's  
107 household, provided the adult works the maximum number of hours  
108 the adult's caregiving responsibilities permit. Families receiving  
109 temporary family assistance shall be notified by the department of the  
110 right to petition for such extensions. Notwithstanding the provisions of  
111 this section, the commissioner shall not provide benefits under the  
112 state's temporary family assistance program to a family that is subject  
113 to the twenty-one month benefit limit and has received benefits  
114 beginning on or after October 1, 1996, if such benefits result in that  
115 family's receiving more than sixty months of time-limited benefits  
116 unless that family experiences domestic violence, as defined in Section  
117 402(a)(7)(B), P.L. 104-193. For the purpose of calculating said sixty-  
118 month limit: (I) A month shall count toward the limit if the family  
119 receives assistance for any day of the month, and (II) a month in which  
120 a family receives temporary assistance for needy families benefits that

121 are issued from a jurisdiction other than Connecticut shall count  
122 toward the limit.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2004</i>
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2004</i>

**HS**

*Joint Favorable Subst. C/R*

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