



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 487

January Session, 2005

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1335

Senate, April 21, 2005

The Committee on Education reported through SEN. GAFFEY of the 13th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES.

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

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2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*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

4 (a) The Commissioner of Social Services shall administer all law
5 under the jurisdiction of the Department of Social Services. The
6 commissioner shall have the power and duty to do the following: (1)
7 Administer, coordinate and direct the operation of the department; (2)
8 adopt and enforce regulations, in accordance with chapter 54, as are
9 necessary to implement the purposes of the department as established
10 by statute; (3) establish rules for the internal operation and
11 administration of the department; (4) establish and develop programs
12 and administer services to achieve the purposes of the department as
13 established by statute; (5) contract for facilities, services and programs

14 to implement the purposes of the department as established by statute;
15 (6) process applications and requests for services promptly; (7) with
16 the approval of the Comptroller and in accordance with procedures as
17 may be specified by the Comptroller, make payments to providers of
18 services for individuals who are eligible for benefits from the
19 department as appropriate; (8) make no duplicate awards for items of
20 assistance once granted, except for replacement of lost or stolen checks
21 on which payment has been stopped; [(8)] (9) promote economic self-
22 sufficiency where appropriate in the department's programs, policies,
23 practices and staff interactions with recipients; [(9)] (10) act as advocate
24 for the need of more comprehensive and coordinated programs for
25 persons served by the department; [10] (11) plan services and
26 programs for persons served by the department; [(11)] (12) coordinate
27 outreach activities by public and private agencies assisting persons
28 served by the department; [(12)] (13) consult and cooperate with area
29 and private planning agencies; [(13)] (14) advise and inform municipal
30 officials and officials of social service agencies about social service
31 programs and collect and disseminate information pertaining thereto,
32 including information about federal, state, municipal and private
33 assistance programs and services; [(14)] (15) encourage and facilitate
34 effective communication and coordination among federal, state,
35 municipal and private agencies; [(15)] (16) inquire into the utilization
36 of state and federal government resources which offer solutions to
37 problems of the delivery of social services; [(16)] (17) conduct,
38 encourage and maintain research and studies relating to social services
39 development; [(17)] (18) prepare, review and encourage model
40 comprehensive social service programs; [(18)] (19) maintain an
41 inventory of data and information and act as a clearing house and
42 referral agency for information on state and federal programs and
43 services; and [(19)] (20) conduct, encourage and maintain research and
44 studies and advise municipal officials and officials of social service
45 agencies about forms of intergovernmental cooperation and
46 coordination between public and private agencies designed to advance
47 social service programs. The commissioner may require notice of the
48 submission of all applications by municipalities, any agency thereof,

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: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

This bill clarifies the authority of the Department of Social Services to make payments to providers and makes aspects of the Food Stamp Program consistent with federal law. These changes have no fiscal impact.

OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 1335

**AN ACT CONCERNING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES****SUMMARY:**

This bill explicitly permits the Department of Social Services (DSS), with the comptroller's approval and consistent with her procedures, to make payments directly to providers of services for DSS clients, as appropriate, which is DSS's current practice. (The comptroller is responsible for administering the state's new integrated CORE-CT financial and accounting computer system.)

The bill, consistent with federal law, prohibits DSS from prorating a standard utility allowance under the Food Stamp Program based on the fact that an assisted household shares the utility with someone who is not a member of the assisted household. It also makes a technical correction in a reference to federal food stamp law.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND***Food Stamp Program***

The federally funded Food Stamp Program is administered by the states, which share some of the administrative costs. The program provides supplemental food to people on welfare and low-income families. To obtain food stamps, people must document their income, assets, expenses, and family situation. The amount they receive depends on their situation, determined by a complex formula that looks at their finances, makes certain deductions, and determines their needs.

Utility costs are among the factors considered. A utility allowance is added to other shelter costs. If this total is more than 50% of applicants' income, the amount above 50% ("excess shelter costs") is subtracted from income after certain other deductions. Federal law

allows states to require use of a standard utility allowance rather than actual utility expenditures. In 2003, the legislature exercised this option. Federal law prohibits states that mandate the standard utility allowance from prorating it (7 USC 2014(e)(6)(C)(iii)(III)). The current standard allowance is \$390 for people who pay for heating or cooling, \$210 for those who only pay other utilities, and \$23 for those who only pay for telephone services.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference
Yea 16 Nay 0

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 25 Nay 0