



General Assembly

February Session, 2006

***Raised Bill No. 479***

LCO No. 2355

\*02355\_\_\_\_\_HS\_\*

Referred to Committee on Human Services

Introduced by:  
(HS)

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

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

1 Section 1. Section 17b-112 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2006*):

3 (a) The Department of Social Services shall administer a temporary  
4 family assistance program under which cash assistance shall be  
5 provided to eligible families in accordance with the temporary  
6 assistance for needy families program, established pursuant to the  
7 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of  
8 1996. Under the temporary family assistance program, benefits shall be  
9 provided to a family for not longer than twenty-one months, except as  
10 provided in subsections (b) and (c) of this section. For the purpose of  
11 calculating said twenty-one-month time limit, months of assistance  
12 received on and after January 1, 1996, pursuant to time limits under  
13 the aid to families with dependent children program, shall be  
14 included. For purposes of this section, "family" means one or more  
15 individuals who apply for or receive assistance together under the  
16 temporary family assistance program. If the commissioner determines

17 that federal law allows individuals not otherwise in an eligible covered  
18 group for the temporary family assistance program to become covered,  
19 such family may also, at the discretion of the commissioner, be  
20 composed of (1) a pregnant woman, or (2) a parent, both parents or  
21 other caretaker relative and at least one child who is under the age of  
22 eighteen, or who is under the age of nineteen and a full-time student in  
23 a secondary school or its equivalent. A caretaker relative shall be  
24 related to the child or children by blood, marriage or adoption or shall  
25 be the legal guardian of such a child or pursuing legal proceedings  
26 necessary to achieve guardianship. If the commissioner elects to allow  
27 state eligibility consistent with any change in federal law, the  
28 commissioner may administratively transfer any qualifying family  
29 cases under the cash assistance portion of the state-administered  
30 general assistance program to the temporary family assistance  
31 program without regard to usual eligibility and enrollment  
32 procedures. If such families become an ineligible coverage group  
33 under the federal law, the commissioner shall administratively transfer  
34 such families back to the cash assistance portion of the state-  
35 administered general assistance program without regard to usual  
36 eligibility and enrollment procedures to the degree that such families  
37 are eligible for the state program.

38 (b) The Commissioner of Social Services shall exempt a family from  
39 such time-limited benefits for circumstances including, but not limited  
40 to: (1) A family with a needy caretaker relative who is incapacitated or  
41 of an advanced age, as defined by the commissioner, if there is no  
42 other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (2) a family with  
43 a needy caretaker relative who is needed in the home because of the  
44 incapacity of another member of the household, if there is no other  
45 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (3) a family with a  
46 caretaker relative who is not legally responsible for the dependent  
47 children in the household if such relative's needs are not considered in  
48 calculating the amount of the benefit and there is no other nonexempt  
49 caretaker relative in the household; (4) a family with a caretaker  
50 relative caring for a child who is under one year of age [and who was

51 born not more than ten months after the family's enrollment] if there is  
52 no other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (5) a family  
53 with a pregnant or postpartum caretaker relative if a physician has  
54 indicated that such relative is unable to work and there is no other  
55 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (6) a family with a  
56 caretaker relative determined by the commissioner to be unemployable  
57 and there is no other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household;  
58 [and] (7) minor parents attending and satisfactorily completing high  
59 school or high school equivalency programs; and (8) a family that  
60 meets all of the following criteria: (A) Income below the payment  
61 standard, (B) a caretaker relative who is employed but works less than  
62 thirty-five hours a week due to a documented medical impairment that  
63 limits the caretaker relative's hours of employment, provided such  
64 caretaker relative works the maximum number of hours that his or her  
65 medical impairment permits, and (C) there is no other caretaker  
66 relative in the family who is subject to time-limited benefits.

67 (c) A family who is subject to time-limited benefits may petition the  
68 Commissioner of Social Services for six-month extensions of such  
69 benefits. The commissioner shall grant [not more than two] six-month  
70 extensions to [such] a family who has made a good faith effort to  
71 comply with the requirements of the program and despite such effort  
72 has a total family income at a level below the payment standard, or has  
73 encountered circumstances preventing employment including, but not  
74 limited to: (1) Domestic violence or physical harm to such family's  
75 children; or (2) other circumstances beyond such family's control. The  
76 commissioner shall disregard ninety dollars of earned income in  
77 determining applicable family income. [The commissioner may grant a  
78 subsequent six-month extension if each adult in the family meets one  
79 or more of the following criteria: (A) The adult is precluded from  
80 engaging in employment activities due to domestic violence or another  
81 reason beyond the adult's control; (B) the adult has two or more  
82 substantiated barriers to employment including, but not limited to, the  
83 lack of available child care, substance abuse or addiction, severe  
84 mental or physical health problems, one or more severe learning

85 disabilities, domestic violence or a child who has a serious physical or  
86 behavioral health problem; (C) the adult is working thirty-five or more  
87 hours per week, is earning at least the minimum wage and continues  
88 to earn less than the family's temporary family assistance payment  
89 standard; or (D) the adult is employed and works less than thirty-five  
90 hours per week due to (i) a documented medical impairment that  
91 limits the adult's hours of employment, provided the adult works the  
92 maximum number of hours that the medical condition permits, or (ii)  
93 the need to care for a disabled member of the adult's household,  
94 provided the adult works the maximum number of hours the adult's  
95 caregiving responsibilities permit. Families receiving temporary family  
96 assistance shall be notified by the department of the right to petition  
97 for such extensions.] Notwithstanding the provisions of this section,  
98 the commissioner shall not provide benefits under the state's  
99 temporary family assistance program to a family that is subject to the  
100 twenty-one month benefit limit and has received benefits beginning on  
101 or after October 1, 1996, if such benefits result in that family's receiving  
102 more than sixty months of time-limited benefits unless that family  
103 experiences domestic violence, as [defined] described in [Section  
104 402(a)(7)(B), P.L. 104-193] 42 USC 608 (a)(7)(c)(iii). For the purpose of  
105 calculating said sixty-month limit: [(I)] (A) A month shall count toward  
106 the limit if the family receives assistance for any day of the month, and  
107 [(II)] (B) a month in which a family receives temporary assistance for  
108 needy families benefits that are issued from a jurisdiction other than  
109 Connecticut shall count toward the limit.

110 (d) Under said program (1) no family shall be eligible that has total  
111 gross earnings exceeding the federal poverty level, however, in the  
112 calculation of the benefit amount for eligible families and previously  
113 eligible families that become ineligible temporarily because of receipt  
114 of workers' compensation benefits by a family member who  
115 subsequently returns to work immediately after the period of receipt of  
116 such benefits, earned income shall be disregarded up to the federal  
117 poverty level; and (2) [the increase in benefits to a family in which an  
118 infant is born after the initial ten months of participation in the

119 program shall be limited to an amount equal to fifty per cent of the  
120 average incremental difference between the amounts paid per each  
121 family size; and (3)] a disqualification penalty shall be established for  
122 failure to cooperate with the biometric identifier system. Except when  
123 determining eligibility for a six-month extension of benefits pursuant  
124 to subsection (c) of this section, the commissioner shall disregard the  
125 first fifty dollars per month of income attributable to current child  
126 support that a family receives in determining eligibility and benefit  
127 levels for temporary family assistance. Any current child support in  
128 excess of fifty dollars per month collected by the department on behalf  
129 of an eligible child shall be considered in determining eligibility but  
130 shall not be considered when calculating benefits and shall be taken as  
131 reimbursement for assistance paid under this section, except that when  
132 the current child support collected exceeds the family's monthly award  
133 of temporary family assistance benefits plus fifty dollars, the current  
134 child support shall be paid to the family and shall be considered when  
135 calculating benefits.

136 (e) A family receiving assistance under said program shall cooperate  
137 with child support enforcement, under title IV-D of the Social Security  
138 Act. A family shall be ineligible for benefits for failure to cooperate  
139 with child support enforcement.

140 (f) A family leaving assistance at the end of (1) said twenty-one-  
141 month time limit, including a family with income above the payment  
142 standard, or (2) the sixty-month limit shall have an interview for the  
143 purpose of being informed of services that may continue to be  
144 available to such family, including employment services available  
145 through the Labor Department. Said interview shall contain a  
146 determination of benefits available to said family provided by the  
147 Department of Social Services. Said interview shall also include a  
148 determination of whether such family is eligible for food stamps or  
149 Medicaid. Information and referrals shall be made to such a family for  
150 services and benefits including, but not limited to, the earned income  
151 tax credit, rental subsidies emergency housing, employment services

152 and energy assistance.

153 (g) An applicant or recipient of temporary family assistance who is  
154 adversely affected by a decision of the Commissioner of Social Services  
155 may request and shall be provided a hearing in accordance with  
156 section 17b-60.

157 Sec. 2. Section 17b-112e of the general statutes is repealed and the  
158 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2006*):

159 (a) The Department of Social Services shall provide safety net  
160 services for certain families no longer receiving benefits or who are at  
161 risk of losing benefits under the temporary family assistance program.  
162 Such families include those who are not eligible for six-month  
163 extensions of benefits due to: (1) The receipt of two sanctions from the  
164 department during the first twenty months of the twenty-one-month  
165 time limit of said temporary family assistance program; [or] (2) the  
166 determination by the department that such a family has not made a  
167 good-faith effort to seek and maintain employment; or (3) the family  
168 having reached a time limit that precludes the granting of an extension  
169 provided the family's total income is at a level below the payment  
170 standard.

171 (b) Said safety net shall consist of services provided through the  
172 existing community service delivery network with additional  
173 resources provided by the Department of Social Services. Services shall  
174 be provided in-kind or through vendor or voucher payment. Services  
175 may include the following: (1) Food, shelter, clothing and employment  
176 assistance; (2) eviction prevention; (3) intensive case management; (4)  
177 continuous monitoring for child abuse or neglect; and (5) for families  
178 at risk of losing benefits under the temporary family assistance  
179 program, individual performance contracts that shall be administered  
180 by the Labor Department and that require job training, job searching,  
181 volunteer work, participation in parenting programs or counseling or  
182 any other requirements deemed necessary by the Labor Commissioner.

183 (c) Families successfully meeting the program requirements  
 184 established by the individual performance contracts in subdivision (5)  
 185 of subsection (b) of this section prior to the end of the twenty-one-  
 186 month time limit shall be considered to have made a good faith effort  
 187 to comply with the requirements of the program for the purposes of  
 188 qualifying for a six-month extension, provided they have made a good  
 189 faith effort to comply with the individual performance contract or have  
 190 not incurred a sanction subsequent to completing the individual  
 191 performance contract.

192 (d) The Commissioner of Social Services, pursuant to section 17b-10,  
 193 shall implement policies and procedures necessary for the purposes of  
 194 this section while in the process of adopting such policies and  
 195 procedures in regulation form, provided the commissioner prints  
 196 notice of intention to adopt the regulations in the Connecticut Law  
 197 Journal [within] not later than twenty days [of] after implementing  
 198 such policies and procedures. Policies and procedures implemented  
 199 pursuant to this subsection shall be valid until the time final  
 200 regulations are effective.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2006</i>	17b-112
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2006</i>	17b-112e

**Statement of Purpose:**

To: (1) Exempt from time-limited benefits, persons with limited ability to work due to a medical impairment, (2) revise criteria for six-month extensions of temporary family assistance benefits, (3) eliminate the family cap provision which reduces the level of benefit received by an otherwise eligible family, and (4) extend safety net services to families reaching the end of time limited benefits with income below the payment standard.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*