



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 606

February Session, 2008

Substitute Senate Bill No. 666

Senate, April 14, 2008

The Committee on Appropriations reported through SEN. HARP of the 10th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE REDUCTION OF CHILD POVERTY.

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

1 Section 1. Section 17b-27a of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2008*):

3 (a) There is established within the Department of Social Services,
4 within available appropriations, the John S. Martinez Fatherhood
5 Initiative. Said initiative shall promote the positive involvement and
6 interaction of fathers with their children with an emphasis on children
7 eligible or formerly eligible for services funded by the temporary
8 assistance for needy families block grant and shall identify those
9 services that effectively encourage and enhance responsible and
10 skillful parenting and those services that increase the ability of fathers
11 to meet the financial and medical needs of their children through
12 employment services and child support enforcement measures. The
13 objectives of the initiative shall be to: (1) Promote public education
14 concerning the financial and emotional responsibilities of fatherhood;
15 (2) assist men in preparation for the legal, financial and emotional

16 responsibilities of fatherhood; (3) promote the establishment of
17 paternity at childbirth; (4) encourage fathers, regardless of marital
18 status, to foster their emotional connection to and financial support of
19 their children; (5) establish support mechanisms for fathers in their
20 relationship with their children, regardless of their marital and
21 financial status; and (6) integrate state and local services available for
22 families.

23 (b) The Department of Social Services shall, within available
24 appropriations, award grants to entities to encourage and promote the
25 objectives of the fatherhood initiative.

26 (c) The Department of Social Services shall award grants to entities
27 under this section for programs and services that provide (1)
28 employment and training opportunities for low-income fathers to
29 increase the earning capacity of such fathers; (2) classes in parenting
30 and financial management; and (3) other support services and
31 programs that promote responsible parenting, financial stability, and
32 communication and interaction between fathers and their children.

33 (d) Applicants for grants provided pursuant to this section shall
34 apply annually to the Commissioner of Social Services at such time
35 and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes. The commissioner
36 shall require a grantee to (1) implement accountability measures and
37 results-based outcomes as a condition of being awarded a grant; and
38 (2) leverage funds through existing resources and collaboration with
39 community-based and nonprofit organizations. The commissioner
40 shall establish criteria for eligibility for grants and for the awarding of
41 grants pursuant to this section.

42 (e) Not later than July 1, 2009, and annually thereafter, the
43 commissioner shall report, in accordance with section 11-4a, to the
44 joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance
45 of matters relating to human services on the grant program's
46 effectiveness in achieving the goals specified in subsection (a) of this
47 section.

48 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2008*) (a) The Department of
49 Education, in collaboration with the youth futures committee
50 established pursuant to section 1 of public act 06-182, shall, within
51 available appropriations, establish a grant program to provide grants
52 to five school districts to improve the educational and career outcomes
53 for minority male youths. Grants awarded under this section shall be
54 used to provide such youths with access to (1) educational and career
55 mentoring programs; and (2) classes on leadership skills, resume
56 writing and interviewing skills, conflict resolution, citizenship and
57 personal accountability, including sexual responsibility.

58 (b) Applicants for grants provided pursuant to this section shall
59 apply annually to the Commissioner of Education at such time and in
60 such manner as the commissioner prescribes. The Department of
61 Education may retain up to five per cent of the funds appropriated for
62 purposes of this section to administer the program.

63 (c) Not later than July 1, 2009, and annually thereafter, the
64 Commissioner of Education shall report, in accordance with section 11-
65 4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committees of the
66 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human
67 services, education and appropriations on the efficacy of the grant
68 program in improving the educational and career outcomes of such
69 youths.

70 Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) The Department of Social Services shall
71 develop a plan to implement an on-line application for the food stamp
72 program. Not later than September 1, 2008, the department shall
73 report, in accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes, on the
74 plan to the Governor and to the joint standing committee of the
75 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human
76 services. Such report shall include the cost of such plan and document
77 the availability of federal resources to fund such plan.

78 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not later than September 1,
79 2008, the Department of Social Services, within available
80 appropriations, shall make available a prescreening tool on the

81 department's web site to aid potential food stamp program applicants
82 in determining their eligibility for the program.

83 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2008*) (a) The Department of Social
84 Services shall, within available appropriations, administer a
85 competitive grant program to provide grants to entities to serve
86 communities with a high rate of adolescent pregnancy by providing
87 funding for programs to reduce adolescent pregnancy and promote
88 positive youth development.

89 (b) Applicants for grants shall apply annually to the Commissioner
90 of Social Services at such time and in such manner as the commissioner
91 prescribes. The commissioner shall require a grantee to implement
92 research-based programs focused on reducing and preventing
93 adolescent pregnancy and preparing youth for college, employment
94 and citizenship, and to demonstrate its plans to leverage funds
95 through existing resources and collaboration with community
96 providers, schools and other public and private partnerships. The
97 commissioner shall establish criteria for eligibility for grants and for
98 the awarding of grants under this section. The Department of Social
99 Services may seek private funds for the program.

100 (c) Grants awarded under this section shall be used to fund: (1)
101 Career planning and mentoring; (2) health and sex education; (3)
102 enrichment activities; (4) violence prevention; (5) peer network and
103 support; (6) school advocacy and tutoring; (7) mental health
104 counseling; (8) drug and alcohol risk assessment; and (9) life skills
105 development.

106 (d) Not later than July 1, 2009, and annually thereafter, the
107 commissioner shall report, in accordance with section 11-4a of the
108 general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General
109 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human services on
110 the program's effectiveness in reducing adolescent pregnancy and
111 achieving academic success and other positive outcomes for youth
112 participating in the program.

113 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2008*) The Department of Social
114 Services, in conjunction with the Departments of Education and
115 Children and Families and the Children's Trust Fund, shall establish,
116 within available appropriations, a work readiness pilot program for
117 first-time parents with children under the age of one who are exempt
118 from the work participation requirements of the temporary assistance
119 for needy families program. The pilot program shall focus on strategies
120 to achieve the following goals: (1) Improve the literacy skills and basic
121 educational levels of the parent; (2) promote the participation of the
122 parent in his or her child's education; (3) allow a child to reach his or
123 her full educational potential; (4) move families toward self-sufficiency
124 and out of poverty; and (5) provide opportunities for the parent to
125 obtain education, skills and knowledge necessary to obtain
126 employment after the exemption period is over.

127 (b) The pilot program shall be conducted in up to five
128 geographically targeted neighborhoods with a high percentage of teen
129 parents. Such pilot program shall be located in an area accessible to the
130 parent and his or her child. The pilot program shall coordinate the
131 following existing programs into a cohesive program for the parent
132 and child: (1) The Nurturing Families Network established pursuant to
133 section 17a-56 of the general statutes; (2) the Healthy Start program; (3)
134 the Department Of Social Services' "Jobs First" program; (4) the
135 HUSKY Plan; and (5) any other safety net programs. The department
136 shall develop interagency agreements to coordinate programs for
137 purposes of the pilot program.

138 (c) The pilot program shall include, but not be limited to: (1)
139 Educational assessment and career planning; (2) literacy programs; (3)
140 high school equivalency preparation; (4) English as a second language;
141 (5) job training and internship opportunities; (6) access to state public
142 institutions of higher education; (7) quality on-site infant care; (8)
143 home visitation; (9) child development, parenting education and peer
144 support; (10) health and mental health services; and (11) basic needs,
145 including, but not limited to, safe and adequate housing.

146 (d) The department shall monitor the outcomes of participants of
147 the program, including, but not limited to, the percentage of children
148 meeting age and developmental milestones, and the percentage of
149 parents earning high school diplomas or achieving other educational
150 goals and the percentage of successful job placements and job
151 retention.

152 (e) Not later than July 1, 2009, and annually thereafter, the
153 Commissioner of Social Services shall report, in accordance with
154 section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committees of
155 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
156 education, human services and appropriations and to the Child
157 Poverty and Prevention Council, on the effectiveness of the program in
158 achieving the goals specified in subsection (a) of this section.

159 Sec. 7. Subsection (d) of section 17b-112 of the 2008 supplement to
160 the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
161 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2008*):

162 (d) Under said program (1) no family shall be eligible that has total
163 gross earnings exceeding the federal poverty level, however, in the
164 calculation of the benefit amount for eligible families and previously
165 eligible families that become ineligible temporarily because of receipt
166 of workers' compensation benefits by a family member who
167 subsequently returns to work immediately after the period of receipt of
168 such benefits, earned income shall be disregarded up to the federal
169 poverty level; (2) the increase in benefits to a family in which an infant
170 is born after the initial ten months of participation in the program shall
171 be limited to an amount equal to fifty per cent of the average
172 incremental difference between the amounts paid per each family size;
173 and (3) a disqualification penalty shall be established for failure to
174 cooperate with the biometric identifier system. Except when
175 determining eligibility for a six-month extension of benefits pursuant
176 to subsection (c) of this section, the commissioner shall disregard the
177 first [fifty] one hundred dollars per month of income attributable to
178 current child support that a family receives in determining eligibility

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 chamber thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 09 \$	FY 10 \$
Department of Social Services	GF - Implements the Budget	350,000	350,000
Department of Education	GF - Implements the Budget	150,000	150,000
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Revenue Loss	600,000	600,000

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

Section 1 of this bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to award grants to promote the objectives of the fatherhood initiative. This program is to be implemented within available appropriations. sHB 5021 (the budget bill, as reported by the Appropriations Committee) contains \$150,000 for this grant program.

Section 2 of this bill requires the Department of Education to establish a grant program to improve the educational and career outcomes for minority male youths. This program is to be implemented within available appropriations. sHB 5021 contains \$150,000 for this grant program.

Section 3 requires DSS to develop a plan for implementation of an on-line application for the food stamp program. The department will incur minor administrative costs to develop this plan.

Section 4 requires DSS to provide a food stamp eligibility pre-screening tool on its website. This would result in a minor administrative cost if the department had available staff in house to make these programming changes. However, it may cost up to \$25,000

should the department need to hire an outside contractor to develop this tool. This tool is to be developed within available appropriations. sHB 5021 contains no funding for this requirement.

Section 5 of this bill requires DSS to establish a grant program to serve communities with high rates of adolescent pregnancy. This program is to be implemented within available appropriations. sHB 5021 contains \$50,000 for this grant program.

Section 6 of this bill requires DSS to establish a work readiness pilot program for first time parents. This program is to be implemented within available appropriations. sHB 5021 contains \$150,000 for this grant program.

Section 7 of this bill increases the monthly child support disregard under the Temporary Family Assistance program from \$50 to \$100. This will result in an annual loss of revenue to the state of approximately \$600,000. sHB 5021 assumes this change.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 666*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE REDUCTION OF CHILD POVERTY.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill establishes several initiatives aimed at reducing child poverty. It:

1. creates two grant programs targeting male youths, one to help young fathers be more involved in their children's lives and one to improve the outcomes of minority males;
2. requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to administer a grant program to help reduce adolescent pregnancies in certain communities;
3. requires DSS, in conjunction with the Education and Children and Families departments and the Children's Trust Fund (CTF), to establish a work-readiness pilot program for certain low-income, first-time parents; and
4. requires DSS to develop (a) an on-line tool that helps individuals determine whether they qualify for Food Stamps and (b) a plan to allow Food Stamps applicants to apply on-line; and
5. increases the amount of child support income that DSS disregards when determining eligibility for Temporary Family Assistance (TFA).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2008

FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE***Grants to Entities Providing Services to Low-Income Fathers***

By law, DSS, within available appropriations, runs the John S.

Martinez Fatherhood Initiative, whose purpose is to promote the positive involvement and interaction of fathers with their children, with an emphasis on children eligible for, or former recipients of, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)-funded programs.

The bill requires DSS, within available appropriations, to award grants to entities to encourage and promote the initiative's objectives. Specifically, the grants must be used for programs and services that provide (1) employment and training opportunities for low-income fathers to increase their earning capacity; (2) parenting and financial management classes; and (3) other support services and programs that promote responsible parenting, financial stability, and communication and interaction between fathers and their children.

Grant applicants must apply annually to the DSS commissioner at a time, and in manner, that he prescribes. The commissioner must require grantees to (1) implement accountability measures and results-based outcomes as a condition of being awarded a grant and (2) leverage funds through existing resources and collaboration with community-based nonprofit organizations. The commissioner establishes grant eligibility criteria.

The commissioner must annually report on the grant program. The first report is due by July 1, 2009 and goes to the Human Services committee. It must state the program's effectiveness in helping meet the fatherhood initiative's objectives.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (SDE) GRANT PROGRAM FOR IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER OUTCOMES FOR MINORITY YOUTH MALES

The bill requires the SDE, in collaboration with the Youth Futures Committee and within available appropriations, to establish a grant program to help five school districts improve the educational and career outcomes for their minority male students. The grants must offer the youths access to (1) educational and career mentoring programs and (2) classes in leadership skills; resume writing and interviewing skills; conflict resolution; citizenship; and personal

responsibility, including sexual responsibility.

The districts must apply annually to the SDE commissioner, in a manner she prescribes. The department may keep up to 5% of any funds appropriated for the program to administer it.

The commissioner must report annually to the Human Services, Education, and Appropriations committees on the program's efficacy in meeting its goals. The first report is due by July 1, 2009.

GRANTS FOR ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY PREVENTION

The bill requires DSS, within available appropriations, to offer competitive grants to entities that serve communities with high adolescent pregnancy rates. The grants are intended to reduce these numbers by promoting positive youth development.

Grant applicants apply annually to the DSS commissioner, as he prescribes. He must require grantees to implement research-based programs that focus on reducing and preventing pregnancy and preparing youth for college, work, and citizenship. Grantees must also demonstrate their plans to leverage funds through existing resources and collaboration with community providers, schools, and other public and private partnerships. The commissioner must establish eligibility criteria for the grants, and the department can seek private funds for the program.

Specific Use of Grants

Awarded grants must be used to fund:

1. career planning and mentoring,
2. health and sex education,
3. enrichment activities,
4. violence prevention,
5. peer networks and support,

6. school advocacy and tutoring,
7. mental health counseling,
8. drug and alcohol risk assessment, and
9. life skills development.

Report

The bill requires the DSS commissioner to report to the Human Services Committee on the program's effectiveness in reducing these pregnancies and helping participating youths achieve academic success and other positive outcomes.

WORK READINESS PILOT PROGRAM

The bill requires DSS, in conjunction with the Department of Children and Families, SDE, and the CTF and within available appropriations, to establish a work readiness pilot program for first-time parents with children under age one who are exempt from the federal TANF block grant's work participation requirements.

The program must be conducted in up to five geographically targeted neighborhoods with a high percentage of teen parents. It must be located in an area accessible to both the parent and his or her child. And it must coordinate the following programs, using interagency agreements, into a cohesive program for the parent and child: Nurturing Families Network, Healthy Start, Jobs First, HUSKY, and any other safety net programs.

The pilot must focus on:

1. improving the parent's literacy skills and basic educational levels,
2. promoting the parent's participation in his or her child's education,
3. allowing the child to reach his or her full educational potential,

4. moving families toward self-sufficiency and out of poverty,
5. providing opportunities for the parent to obtain education, skills, and knowledge needed to find work once the exemption period ends.

The program must include, at a minimum:

1. educational assessment and career planning;
2. literacy;
3. high school equivalency preparation;
4. English as a second language;
5. job training and internships;
6. access to the state's public higher education institutions;
7. quality on-site infant care;
8. home visitation;
9. child development, parenting education, and peer support;
10. health and mental health services; and
11. basic needs including safe and adequate housing.

Program Monitoring/Reporting

DSS must monitor the pilot participants' outcomes, including the percentage of (1) children meeting age and developmental milestones, (2) parents earning high school diplomas or achieving other educational goals, and (3) successful job placements and retention.

DSS must annually report on the pilot program, with the first report due by July 1, 2009. The report must focus on the program's effectiveness in meeting its goals. It goes to the Education, Human Services, and Appropriations committees and to the Child Poverty and

Prevention Council.

FOOD STAMPS—ON LINE APPLICATIONS

The bill requires DSS, by September 1, 2008 and within available appropriations, to make available a prescreening tool on its website to help potential Food Stamp applicants determine whether they might qualify for the program.

DSS must also develop a plan to implement an on-line Food Stamp application. It must report to the governor and the Human Services Committee on the plan by September 1, 2008. The report must include the plan's costs, and document the availability of federal resources to pay for it.

CHILD SUPPORT DISREGARD FOR TFA FAMILIES

The bill increases, from \$50 to \$100, the amount of monthly child support that DSS must disregard when determining income eligibility and benefit levels in the TFA program. Raising this limit allows families to keep more child support income without affecting their TFA benefits. If DSS collects more than the disregard limit, the excess counts towards eligibility but not the benefit amount and is considered reimbursement for TFA benefits. But when the current support collected exceeds the family's monthly TFA benefit plus the limit, the child support is paid directly to the family and is counted for purposes of determining the TFA benefit.

BACKGROUND

Youth Futures Committee

Established in 2006, this 17-member committee must develop service delivery guidelines, improve communications among agencies, assess existing resources to maximize community youth services, and collaborate with partnerships to facilitate positive youth outcomes.

TANF Work Requirements

Individuals who receive ongoing assistance funded by the TANF block grant (TFA in Connecticut) are subject to time limits and work

requirements. Certain individuals are exempt from the requirements, including parents with children under age one.

Related Bills

sSB 34, reported by Human Services and Appropriations, contains the same child support disregard provision.

sSB 660, reported by Human Services, codifies the Food Stamp Employment and Training program and requires DSS to maximize federal funding for it.

SB 266, reported by the Children’s and Human Services committees, creates a task force to study the causes of fatherlessness.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference
Yea 18 Nay 0 (03/18/2008)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 54 Nay 0