



General Assembly

February Session, 2008

**Raised Bill No. 5907**

LCO No. 3052

\*03052\_\_\_\_\_HS\_\*

Referred to Committee on Human Services

Introduced by:  
(HS)

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

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2008*) (a) The Department of Social  
2 Services shall establish and administer a transition program to provide  
3 cash assistance benefits to families who are no longer eligible for  
4 benefits under the temporary family assistance program established  
5 pursuant to section 17b-112 of the 2008 supplement to the general  
6 statutes, as amended by this act. Under the transition program, cash  
7 assistance benefits shall be provided to (1) a family who is ineligible  
8 for an extension of cash assistance benefits because such family's total  
9 family income is above the payment standard, and (2) a family who is  
10 ineligible for cash assistance benefits because of earned income at or  
11 above the federal poverty level.

12 (b) The department shall provide cash assistance benefits to an  
13 eligible family for one year following the date that such family is  
14 determined to be eligible for benefits, as follows: (1) For the first six  
15 months of eligibility, a family shall receive benefits in an amount equal  
16 to two-thirds of the amount that the family received under the

17 temporary family assistance program; and (2) for the subsequent six  
18 months, a family shall receive benefits in an amount equal to one-third  
19 of the amount that the family received under the temporary family  
20 assistance program.

21 (c) Cash assistance benefits provided under this section shall be  
22 entirely state-funded and shall not be considered when calculating  
23 time-limited benefits received under the temporary family assistance  
24 program.

25 Sec. 2. Section 17b-112 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes  
26 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
27 *1, 2008*):

28 (a) The Department of Social Services shall administer a temporary  
29 family assistance program under which cash assistance shall be  
30 provided to eligible families in accordance with the temporary  
31 assistance for needy families program, established pursuant to the  
32 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of  
33 1996. The Commissioner of Social Services may operate portions of the  
34 temporary family assistance program as a solely state-funded  
35 program, separate from the federal temporary assistance for needy  
36 families program, if the commissioner determines that doing so will  
37 enable the state to avoid fiscal penalties under the temporary  
38 assistance for needy families program. Families receiving assistance  
39 under the solely state-funded portion of the temporary family  
40 assistance program shall be subject to the same conditions of eligibility  
41 as those receiving assistance under the federal temporary assistance for  
42 needy families program. Under the temporary family assistance  
43 program, benefits shall be provided to a family for not longer than  
44 twenty-one months, except as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of  
45 this section. For the purpose of calculating said twenty-one-month  
46 time limit, months of assistance received on and after January 1, 1996,  
47 pursuant to time limits under the aid to families with dependent  
48 children program, shall be included. For purposes of this section,

49 "family" means one or more individuals who apply for or receive  
50 assistance together under the temporary family assistance program. If  
51 the commissioner determines that federal law allows individuals not  
52 otherwise in an eligible covered group for the temporary family  
53 assistance program to become covered, such family may also, at the  
54 discretion of the commissioner, be composed of (1) a pregnant woman,  
55 or (2) a parent, both parents or other caretaker relative and at least one  
56 child who is under the age of eighteen, or who is under the age of  
57 nineteen and a full-time student in a secondary school or its  
58 equivalent. A caretaker relative shall be related to the child or children  
59 by blood, marriage or adoption or shall be the legal guardian of such a  
60 child or pursuing legal proceedings necessary to achieve guardianship.  
61 If the commissioner elects to allow state eligibility consistent with any  
62 change in federal law, the commissioner may administratively transfer  
63 any qualifying family cases under the cash assistance portion of the  
64 state-administered general assistance program to the temporary family  
65 assistance program without regard to usual eligibility and enrollment  
66 procedures. If such families become an ineligible coverage group  
67 under the federal law, the commissioner shall administratively transfer  
68 such families back to the cash assistance portion of the state-  
69 administered general assistance program without regard to usual  
70 eligibility and enrollment procedures to the degree that such families  
71 are eligible for the state program.

72 (b) The Commissioner of Social Services shall exempt a family from  
73 such time-limited benefits for circumstances including, but not limited  
74 to: (1) A family with a needy caretaker relative who is incapacitated or  
75 of an advanced age, as defined by the commissioner, if there is no  
76 other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (2) a family with  
77 a needy caretaker relative who is needed in the home because of the  
78 incapacity of another member of the household, if there is no other  
79 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (3) a family with a  
80 caretaker relative who is not legally responsible for the dependent  
81 children in the household if such relative's needs are not considered in  
82 calculating the amount of the benefit and there is no other nonexempt

83 caretaker relative in the household; (4) a family with a caretaker  
84 relative caring for a child who is under one year of age and who was  
85 born not more than ten months after the family's enrollment if there is  
86 no other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (5) a family  
87 with a pregnant or postpartum caretaker relative if a physician has  
88 indicated that such relative is unable to work and there is no other  
89 nonexempt caretaker relative in the household; (6) a family with a  
90 caretaker relative determined by the commissioner to be unemployable  
91 and there is no other nonexempt caretaker relative in the household;  
92 [and] (7) a family that meets all of the following criteria: (A) Income  
93 below the payment standard, (B) a caretaker relative who is employed  
94 but works less than thirty-five hours a week due to a documented  
95 medical impairment that limits the caretaker relative's hours of  
96 employment, provided such caretaker relative works the maximum  
97 number of hours that his or her medical impairment permits, and (C)  
98 there is not another caretaker relative in the family who is subject to  
99 time-limited benefits, provided such family shall be subject to  
100 employment and training requirements to the extent permitted by the  
101 impairment and that prior to discontinuing cash assistance benefits or  
102 imposing a sanction on such family, an individualized assessment of  
103 the family is performed and, based on the findings of such assessment,  
104 an appropriate accommodation, if required, is made to enable the  
105 family to meet such employment and training requirements; and (8)  
106 minor parents attending and satisfactorily completing high school or  
107 high school equivalency programs.

108 (c) A family who is subject to time-limited benefits may petition the  
109 Commissioner of Social Services for six-month extensions of such  
110 benefits. The commissioner shall grant not more than two extensions to  
111 such family who has made a good faith effort to comply with the  
112 requirements of the program and despite such effort has a total family  
113 income at a level below the payment standard, or has encountered  
114 circumstances preventing employment including, but not limited to:  
115 (1) Domestic violence or physical harm to such family's children; or (2)  
116 other circumstances beyond such family's control. The commissioner

117 shall disregard ninety dollars of earned income in determining  
118 applicable family income. The commissioner may grant a subsequent  
119 six-month extension if each adult in the family meets one or more of  
120 the following criteria: (A) The adult is precluded from engaging in  
121 employment activities due to domestic violence or another reason  
122 beyond the adult's control; (B) the adult has two or more substantiated  
123 barriers to employment including, but not limited to, the lack of  
124 available child care, substance abuse or addiction, severe mental or  
125 physical health problems, one or more severe learning disabilities,  
126 domestic violence, homelessness or risk of homelessness, or a child  
127 who has a serious physical or behavioral health problem; (C) the adult  
128 is working thirty-five or more hours per week, is earning at least the  
129 minimum wage and continues to earn less than the family's temporary  
130 family assistance payment standard; or (D) the adult is employed and  
131 works less than thirty-five hours per week due to (i) a documented  
132 medical impairment that limits the adult's hours of employment,  
133 provided the adult works the maximum number of hours that the  
134 medical condition permits, or (ii) the need to care for a disabled  
135 member of the adult's household, provided the adult works the  
136 maximum number of hours the adult's caregiving responsibilities  
137 permit. Families receiving temporary family assistance shall be  
138 notified by the department of the right to petition for such extensions.  
139 Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, the commissioner shall  
140 not provide benefits under the state's temporary family assistance  
141 program to a family that is subject to the twenty-one month benefit  
142 limit and has received benefits beginning on or after October 1, 1996, if  
143 such benefits result in that family's receiving more than sixty months  
144 of time-limited benefits unless that family experiences domestic  
145 violence, as defined in Section 402(a)(7)(B), P.L. 104-193. For the  
146 purpose of calculating said sixty-month limit: (I) A month shall count  
147 toward the limit if the family receives assistance for any day of the  
148 month, and (II) a month in which a family receives temporary  
149 assistance for needy families benefits that are issued from a jurisdiction  
150 other than Connecticut shall count toward the limit.

151 (d) Under said program (1) no family shall be eligible that has total  
152 gross earnings exceeding the federal poverty level, however, in the  
153 calculation of the benefit amount for eligible families and previously  
154 eligible families that become ineligible temporarily because of receipt  
155 of workers' compensation benefits by a family member who  
156 subsequently returns to work immediately after the period of receipt of  
157 such benefits, earned income shall be disregarded up to the federal  
158 poverty level; (2) the increase in benefits to a family in which an infant  
159 is born after the initial ten months of participation in the program shall  
160 be limited to an amount equal to fifty per cent of the average  
161 incremental difference between the amounts paid per each family size;  
162 and (3) a disqualification penalty shall be established for failure to  
163 cooperate with the biometric identifier system. Except when  
164 determining eligibility for a six-month extension of benefits pursuant  
165 to subsection (c) of this section, the commissioner shall disregard the  
166 first ~~[fifty]~~ one hundred dollars per month of income attributable to  
167 current child support that a family receives in determining eligibility  
168 and benefit levels for temporary family assistance for a family with one  
169 child, and one hundred fifty dollars per month of income attributable  
170 to current child support that a family receives in determining  
171 eligibility and benefit levels for temporary family assistance for a  
172 family with more than one child. Any current child support in excess  
173 of ~~[fifty]~~ one hundred dollars per month for a family with one child or  
174 one hundred fifty dollars per month for a family with more than one  
175 child collected by the department on behalf of an eligible child shall be  
176 considered in determining eligibility but shall not be considered when  
177 calculating benefits and shall be taken as reimbursement for assistance  
178 paid under this section, except that when the current child support  
179 collected exceeds the family's monthly award of temporary family  
180 assistance benefits plus ~~[fifty]~~ one hundred dollars for a family with  
181 one child and one hundred fifty dollars for a family with more than  
182 one child, the current child support shall be paid to the family and  
183 shall be considered when calculating benefits.

184 (e) A family receiving assistance under said program shall cooperate

185 with child support enforcement, under title IV-D of the Social Security  
186 Act. A family shall be ineligible for benefits for failure to cooperate  
187 with child support enforcement.

188 (f) A family leaving assistance at the end of (1) said twenty-one-  
189 month time limit, including a family with income above the payment  
190 standard, or (2) the sixty-month limit shall have an interview for the  
191 purpose of being informed of services that may continue to be  
192 available to such family, including employment services available  
193 through the Labor Department and cash assistance benefits available  
194 under the transition program established pursuant to section 1 of this  
195 act. Said interview shall contain a determination of benefits available  
196 to said family provided by the Department of Social Services. Said  
197 interview shall also include a determination of whether such family is  
198 eligible for food stamps or Medicaid. Information and referrals shall be  
199 made to such a family for services and benefits including, but not  
200 limited to, the earned income tax credit, rental subsidies emergency  
201 housing, employment services and energy assistance.

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

206 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2008*) (a) For the fiscal year ending  
207 June 30, 2009, the Commissioner of Social Services shall increase the  
208 monthly cash assistance benefit amount under the temporary family  
209 assistance program, pursuant to section 17b-112 of the 2008  
210 supplement to the general statutes, as amended by this act, provided  
211 to a caretaker relative, as described in said section 17b-112 of the 2008  
212 supplement to the general statutes, on behalf of a child, by thirty per  
213 cent over the standard for such payments for the fiscal year ending  
214 June 30, 2008. Any caretaker relative receiving temporary family  
215 assistance benefits from the Department of Social Services for caring  
216 for more than one child shall receive a thirty per cent increase, in

217 accordance with the provisions of this section, that is based on the  
 218 aggregate temporary family assistance benefit amount paid to such  
 219 relative on June 30, 2008. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010, and  
 220 each fiscal year thereafter, the commissioner shall increase the  
 221 temporary family assistance benefit provided to a caretaker relative on  
 222 behalf of a child or children over that of the previous fiscal year by the  
 223 percentage increase, if any, in the consumer price index for urban  
 224 consumers.

225 (b) On and after July 1, 2008, a caretaker relative who makes an  
 226 application with the Department of Social Services for temporary  
 227 family assistance benefits and is determined eligible to receive such  
 228 benefits on behalf of a child shall receive benefits at a rate that is  
 229 determined in accordance with subsection (a) of this section.

230 Sec. 4. (*Effective July 1, 2008*) (a) The sum of \_\_\_\_ dollars is  
 231 appropriated to the Department of Social Services, from the General  
 232 Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, for purposes of section 3  
 233 of this act.

234 (b) The sum of \_\_\_\_ dollars is appropriated to the Department of  
 235 Social Services, from the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June  
 236 30, 2010, for purposes of section 3 of this act.

237 Sec. 5. (*Effective July 1, 2008*) The sum of \_\_\_\_ dollars is appropriated  
 238 to the Department of Social Services, from the General Fund, for the  
 239 fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, to increase the payment standard  
 240 under the temporary family assistance program by ten per cent over  
 241 the payment standard in effect on June 30, 2008.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2008</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2008</i>	17b-112
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2008</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2008</i>	New section

Sec. 5	July 1, 2008	New section
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**Statement of Purpose:**

To make revisions to the temporary family assistance program to provide more support and assistance to families as they transition to self-sufficiency.

*[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.]*