



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 666

February Session, 2008

* SB00666ED 042908 *

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 Section 17b-27a of the general statutes is repealed and the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
179 and benefit levels for temporary family assistance. Any current child
180 support in excess of [fifty] one hundred dollars per month collected by
181 the department on behalf of an eligible child shall be considered in
182 determining eligibility but shall not be considered when calculating

