



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 333**

January Session, 2009

Substitute House Bill No. 6411

*House of Representatives, March 30, 2009*

The Committee on Human Services reported through REP. WALKER of the 93rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## ***AN ACT CONCERNING A REDUCTION IN CHILD POVERTY AND INVESTMENT IN PREVENTION.***

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Not later than fourteen  
2 days after the effective date of this section, the Commissioner of Social  
3 Services shall implement, in accordance with this section, an efficient  
4 and coordinated response for children and families to ensure that their  
5 basic needs are met. In implementing the efficient and coordinated  
6 response, the commissioner shall consult with (1) the chairpersons of  
7 the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having  
8 cognizance of matters relating to human services, public health and  
9 appropriations and the select committee of the General Assembly  
10 having cognizance of matters relating to children; (2) the Child Poverty  
11 and Prevention Council; and (3) any community action agency or other  
12 organization serving children or families.

13 (b) In order to implement the efficient and coordinated response, the  
14 commissioner shall invest in improved and streamlined prevention

15 services to better serve children and families and prevent them from  
16 falling into poverty. The efficient and coordinated response shall be  
17 designed to (1) promote combined, online or multiple-site application  
18 and enrollment processes for programs that serve children or families;  
19 (2) promote cross-enrollment policies, colocation of services and  
20 interdepartmental coordination and consolidation of staff assigned to  
21 such programs; (3) effectuate short-term waivers of income  
22 garnishment by state agencies in cases where such waivers are deemed  
23 appropriate by the commissioner to protect children and families from  
24 hardship and keep families together; (4) promote cost-saving measures  
25 to prevent homelessness and increase housing stability for children  
26 and families; (5) encourage or require homeless shelters to accept every  
27 member of a family at the same time or work to find adequate  
28 alternative arrangements for a family if lack of capacity prevents a  
29 shelter from serving all members of a family at the same time; (6)  
30 review program eligibility requirements and other policies to ensure  
31 that unaccompanied homeless children access critical services that  
32 such children might otherwise have been prevented from receiving  
33 due to age or guardianship requirements; (7) explore utilization of  
34 energy assistance programs authorized under the Low Income Home  
35 Energy Assistance Act of 1981 to maximize and increase monthly food  
36 stamp benefits for families who live in subsidized housing; and (8)  
37 track the impact of such programs and services on children and  
38 families.

39 (c) Not later than sixty days after the effective date of this section  
40 and quarterly thereafter until June 30, 2011, the commissioner shall  
41 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general  
42 statutes, to the Governor and the joint standing committees of the  
43 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human  
44 services, public health and appropriations and the select committee of  
45 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to  
46 children on the implementation of the efficient and coordinated  
47 response, and the progress made to impede family crisis and prevent  
48 children and families from falling into poverty.

49 (d) For purposes of this section, "programs that serve children or  
50 families" shall include, but not be limited to, (1) the HUSKY Program;  
51 (2) Care 4 Kids; (3) the supplemental nutrition assistance program; (4)  
52 temporary assistance for needy families; (5) WIC; (6) heating and  
53 rental assistance; (7) eviction prevention services; (8) free and reduced  
54 breakfast and lunch programs; (9) family literacy programs; (10)  
55 fatherhood programs; (11) job training; (12) economic security  
56 programs; (13) the food stamp employment and training program  
57 established under section 17b-105f of the general statutes; and (14) the  
58 poverty reduction strategies, as defined in section 17b-105e of the  
59 general statutes.

60 (e) In implementing the efficient and coordinated response, the  
61 commissioner shall attempt to meet the prevention goals and  
62 recommendations developed pursuant to section 4-67x of the general  
63 statutes.

64 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) To maximize the outcome of  
65 children and families in this state, the joint standing committees of the  
66 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to  
67 appropriations and human services, in collaboration with the Office of  
68 Policy and Management, shall maximize the use of federal funds  
69 available to this state for any initiatives related to children and  
70 families, including, but not limited to, child poverty reduction  
71 strategies developed by the Child Poverty and Prevention Council  
72 pursuant to section 4-67x of the general statutes and programs with  
73 data-driven decision making that serve children and families.

74 (b) The chairpersons of said committees and the Office of Policy and  
75 Management shall submit a joint report, in accordance with the  
76 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the Governor, the  
77 president pro tempore of the Senate and the speaker of the House of  
78 Representatives regarding such use of federal funds pursuant to  
79 subsection (a) of this section not later than sixty days after the effective  
80 date of this section.



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:

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**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** See below

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to implement an “efficient and coordinated response” for children and families and to invest in improved and streamlined prevention services.

The fiscal impact of these requirements is uncertain, as DSS’s manner of execution cannot be known. Also, the bill does not specify whether the required investment be in addition to any funding currently dedicated to poverty prevention efforts.

Should the department’s execution of the requirements of the bill deviate greatly from its current service structure, additional administrative and programmatic costs may result. Should these efforts result in significant reductions in child poverty, the state may realize programmatic savings in the out years.

The bill also requires the Appropriations and Human Services Committees, in collaboration with the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), to maximize federal revenue and to report their results to the General Assembly. Should these efforts be fruitful, additional state revenue may result. OPM may incur minimal costs to produce such a report within sixty days of passage of the bill.

**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 6411*****AN ACT CONCERNING A REDUCTION IN CHILD POVERTY AND INVESTMENT IN PREVENTION.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioner to implement an “efficient and coordinated response” for children and families to ensure that their basic needs are met. It directs the commissioner to invest in improved and streamlined prevention services to better serve children and families and prevent them from falling into poverty. He must do so no later than 14 days after the bill passes.

The bill directs the commissioner to consult with various entities in implementing the response and requires periodic reporting to the governor and legislative committees.

Finally, the bill directs the Appropriations and Human Services committees, in collaboration with the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), to maximize the use of federal funds for initiatives related to children and families. They must submit a joint report to the governor, Senate president pro tempore, and House speaker no later than 60 days after the bill passes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

**EFFICIENT AND COORDINATED RESPONSE**

The bill states that the efficient and coordinated response must be designed to:

1. promote combined, online, or multiple-site application and enrollment processes for programs that serve children and

- families;
2. promote cross-enrollment policies, colocation of services, and interdepartmental coordination and consolidation of staff assigned to such programs;
  3. effectuate short-term waivers of income garnishment by state agencies in cases where the DSS commissioner deems this appropriate to protect children and families from hardship and keep families together;
  4. promote cost-saving measures to prevent homelessness and increase housing stability for children and families;
  5. encourage or require homeless shelters to accept every member of a family at the same time or work to find adequate alternative arrangements for a family if lack of capacity prevents a shelter from serving an entire family at once;
  6. review program eligibility requirements and other policies to ensure that unaccompanied homeless children have access to critical services that they might otherwise have been prevented from receiving because of their age or lack of a guardian;
  7. explore using energy assistance programs authorized under the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Act to maximize and increase monthly food stamp benefits for families who live in subsidized housing; and
  8. track the impact of such programs and services on children and families.

The bill directs the commissioner to attempt to meet the prevention goals and recommendations of the Child Poverty and Prevention Council. (Among other things the council must develop and promote the implementation of a plan to reduce the number of children living in poverty by 10% between 2004 and 2014.) The commissioner must also consult with the chairpersons of the Human Services, Public

Health, Appropriations, and Children's committees, the Child Poverty and Prevention Council, and any community action agency or other organization serving children or families when implementing the response program.

For purposes of the bill, "programs that serve children or families" include:

1. HUSKY (state subsidized health insurance),
2. Care4Kids (state subsidized child care),
3. the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as Food Stamps),
4. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (the state component of this federal block grant program is called Temporary Family Assistance),
5. Women, Infants and Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program,
6. heating and rental assistance,
7. eviction prevention services,
8. subsidized school breakfast and lunch programs,
9. family literacy programs,
10. fatherhood programs,
11. job training,
12. economic security programs,
13. the Food Stamp Employment and Training program, and
14. other poverty reduction strategies as defined in state statute.

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**Reporting**

The commissioner must submit quarterly status reports to the governor and the Human Services, Public Health, Appropriations, and Children's committees beginning no later than 60 days after the bill passes. Reports must include the progress made to impede family crisis and prevent children and families from falling into poverty. His reporting obligations end on June 30, 2011.

### **MAXIMIZING FEDERAL FUNDS**

The bill directs the Appropriations and Human Services committees, in collaboration with OPM, to maximize the use of federal funds for any initiatives related to children and families, including child poverty reduction strategies developed by the Child Poverty and Prevention Council and programs with data-driven decision making that serve children and families.

The committee chairpersons and OPM must submit a joint report to the governor, Senate president pro tempore, and House speaker regarding their use of federal funds. They must do so no later than 60 days after the bill passes (the same deadline applicable for the first report on the implementation of the efficient and coordinated response program).

### **BACKGROUND**

#### ***Child Poverty and Prevention Council***

The 21-member council is composed of legislative and executive branch appointees. It is required by law to (1) establish prevention goals and recommendations and (2) measure prevention outcomes. It must also consult with experts and service providers and make budget priority recommendations.

### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Select Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference  
Yea 9 Nay 2 (03/03/2009)

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 12 Nay 6 (03/12/2009)