



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 230

January Session, 2009

Substitute House Bill No. 6526

House of Representatives, March 25, 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 ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL THAT MONITORS THE TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

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

1 Section 1. Section 17b-29 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2009*):

3 (a) There is established a council to monitor the implementation of
4 the temporary family assistance program and the employment services
5 program. The council shall be composed of the chairmen and ranking
6 members of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
7 having cognizance of matters relating to human services, or their
8 designees, the chairmen and ranking members of the joint standing
9 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
10 relating to labor, or their designees, one child care provider and one
11 expert on child support enforcement, to be appointed by the president
12 pro tempore of the Senate; one representative of advocacy groups, to
13 be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate; two education and

14 training specialists, one experienced in job training and one
15 experienced in basic adult education, one to be appointed by the
16 minority leader of the Senate and one to be appointed by the minority
17 leader of the House of Representatives; one member of the public who
18 is a current recipient of benefits under the temporary family assistance
19 program, to be appointed by speaker of the House of Representatives;
20 and two members, one experienced in higher education programs and
21 one experienced in teenage pregnancy issues, to be appointed by the
22 majority leader of the House of Representatives. The council shall elect
23 a chairperson from among its members. The council shall convene its
24 first meeting not later than September 1, 1997.

25 (b) Beginning September 1, 1997, at meetings scheduled by the
26 council, the Commissioner of Social Services and the Labor
27 Commissioner shall update the council on the implementation of the
28 temporary family assistance program and the employment services
29 program. The council shall submit recommendations to the
30 department regarding, but not limited to, the availability of quality
31 child care and the provision of seamless child care services, procedures
32 for informing parents and teenagers about family planning and
33 pregnancy prevention, client education regarding their rights and
34 responsibilities, the effectiveness of child support enforcement, the
35 effect of reduced exemptions, time limits and increased sanctions, the
36 coordination with Medicaid managed care and health care reform
37 measures and the fiscal impact of these program changes.

38 (c) Not later than January 1, 2010, and quarterly thereafter, the
39 Commissioner of Social Services and the Labor Commissioner shall
40 submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to
41 members of the council and to the joint standing committee of the
42 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human
43 services concerning the status of the temporary family assistance
44 program and the employment services program. Such report shall
45 include, but not be limited to: (1) Specific information concerning the
46 temporary assistance for needy families program, including (A) the
47 number of families that receive cash assistance and a description of the

48 composition of such families by number, gender, race, ethnicity and
49 age, (B) the number of program applications received, the action taken
50 on each application and the reason for the denial of any application,
51 (C) the number of families whose cash assistance has been terminated
52 and the reason for the termination, (D) the number of families who
53 have received an extension of cash assistance beyond twenty-one
54 months, the number of months that each of the families has received
55 cash assistance and the reason for the most recent extension, (E) the
56 number of families with earned income receiving cash assistance and
57 the amount of each family's income, (F) the number of families
58 receiving cash assistance who have received one sanction from the
59 Department of Social Services and the number of such families who
60 have received more than one sanction from the department, (G) the
61 number of families receiving safety net services, as described in section
62 17b-112e, and (H) the number of families with children that receive
63 supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits and report no
64 income; (2) specific information concerning Jobs First employment
65 services program participants, including (A) the number of
66 participants receiving cash assistance, (B) a description of the
67 participants by gender, race, ethnicity, age and education level, (C) the
68 number of participants enrolled in each employment service, (D) the
69 amount of wages received by each program participant as a result of
70 their participation in the program, and (E) the number of participants
71 that the Labor Department has identified as having one or more
72 barriers to employment and the number of participants having each
73 type of barrier to employment; and (3) expenditures relative to the
74 temporary assistance for needy families block grant, as required by
75 section 17b-114o.

76 [(c)] (d) On January 1, 1998, and quarterly thereafter, the council
77 shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-
78 4a, to the General Assembly on the [implementation] status of the
79 temporary family assistance program and the employment services
80 program.

81 (e) Not later than September 1, 2009, the council shall conduct a

82 study of the status of the temporary family assistance program and the
83 employment services program. Such study shall include, but not be
84 limited to, an examination of (1) the characteristics of the program
85 participants, including the income levels of such participants, (2) the
86 effects of the programs on participants, and (3) areas of the programs
87 needing improvement. To obtain information, the council shall: (A)
88 Review information submitted by the Commissioner of Social Services
89 and the Labor Commissioner, (B) hold informational forums, and (C)
90 seek information from members of the public, who may include
91 municipal officials, educators, program participants, labor union
92 officials, health care providers and advocates for low income families.

93 Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) Not later than February 1, 2010, the
94 council shall submit a report in accordance with the provisions of
95 section 11-4a of the general statutes, on its findings and
96 recommendations to the General Assembly and to each member of the
97 Connecticut congressional delegation concerning the current status of
98 the temporary family assistance program and the employment services
99 program. Such report shall include, but not be limited to, (1) the
100 number of families in the state whose income is at or below the federal
101 poverty level, (2) the number of families in the state whose income is at
102 or below seventy-five per cent of the federal poverty level, (3) a
103 description of the effects of the temporary family assistance program
104 on families with income at or below seventy-five per cent of the federal
105 poverty level, (4) the effects of minimum wage employment on
106 families with incomes at or below the federal poverty level, (5)
107 proposals for improving the temporary family assistance program and
108 Jobs First employment services program, (6) identification of state and
109 federal programs that help reduce the number of families living in
110 poverty, encourage economic development and assist working families
111 and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, and (7) proposals for
112 improving such state and federal programs.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2009</i>	17b-29
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In section 1(c)(1), the word "to" was replaced by the word "for" in the phrase "temporary assistance to needy families" for accuracy.

HS *Joint Favorable Subst.-LCO*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: Minimal

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

This bill requires the Departments of Social Services and Labor to report additional information to the council that oversees the Temporary Family Assistance and Employment Services programs. It additionally requires that council to study the status of these programs and to submit a report to the General Assembly. The departments will incur a minimal administrative cost to carryout the requirements of the bill.

The Out Years

None

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 6526*****AN ACT CONCERNING ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL THAT MONITORS THE TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the council that monitors the Jobs First program (which consists of the Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) cash assistance and Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) programs) to conduct a study of each component. It also requires the council to submit a report, separate from the study, on each program's status.

The bill also requires the commissioners of the departments of Social Services (DSS) and Labor (DOL) to report to the Human Services Committee on both programs.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2009, except that the provision requiring the council report on the TFA and JFES programs to the legislature and the state's Congressional delegation is effective upon passage.

COUNCIL STUDY AND REPORTS***Study***

The bill requires the council, by September 1, 2009, to study the status of the TFA and the Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) programs. The study must examine, at a minimum, (1) the characteristics of program participants, including their income levels; (2) the effects of these programs on participants; and (3) areas of both programs that need improvement. To do its work, the council must (1) review information that DSS and DOL submit; (2) hold informational forums; and (3) seek information from the public, including municipal officials, educators, program participants, labor union officials, health care providers, and advocates for low-income families.

Report

The bill also requires the council, no later than February 1, 2010, to submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly and each member of the state's Congressional delegation, concerning the current status of the TFA and JFES programs. The report must include:

1. the number of families whose income is at or below the federal poverty level (FPL) and the effects of minimum wage employment on them;
2. the number of families with income at or below 75% of the FPL, and a description of the effects of TFA on these families;
3. proposals for improving the two programs; and
4. identification of state and federal programs that help reduce the number of families living in poverty, encourage economic development, and help working families and individuals achieve self-sufficiency and proposals for improving these programs.

DSS AND DOL REPORT

The bill requires the DSS and DOL commissioners, by January 1, 2010 and quarterly thereafter, to submit a report to the members of the Jobs First Monitoring Council and Human Services Committee concerning the TFA and JFES programs.

The report must include, at a minimum:

1. specific information about Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), including (a) the number of families that receive TFA and a description of family composition by number, gender, race, ethnicity, and age; (b) the number of program (presumably TFA) applications, the action taken on each, and reasons for assistance denials; (c) the number of families whose cash assistance has been terminated and the

- reasons for such; (d) the number of families who have received an extension of TFA beyond 21 months, the number of months that each of them has received cash assistance, and the reason for the most recent extension; (e) the number of families with earned income receiving cash assistance and the amount of each family's income; (f) the number of families receiving TFA who have received one sanction (for non-participation in their JFES plan) and the number of families with multiple sanctions; (g) the number of families receiving Safety Net services; and (h) the number of families that receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits who report having no income;
2. specific information about JFES participants, including (a) the number of participants receiving TFA; (b) the same demographic information on participants that is provided for TFA clients plus education level; (c) the number of participants enrolled in each employment service; (d) the amount of wages receive by each program participant as a result of participating; (e) the number of participants that the DOL has identified as having one or more barriers to employment and a break down by type of barrier (e.g., transportation); and
 3. TANF expenditures.

BACKGROUND

TANF

In 1996, Congress passed the TANF provisions in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act. Among other things, this legislation replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) entitlement with a block grant, giving states a great deal of flexibility in designing their welfare to work programs.

Connecticut's main TANF expenditures cover the Jobs First program. DSS administers the TFA program, which provides time-limited cash assistance to needy families, and the DOL helps those

families receiving TFA who can work (non-exempt) find jobs, including providing job search skills. Half of the state's non-exempt TFA recipients must be engaged in at least 30 hours of work activities per week.

Monitoring Council

The Jobs First Monitoring Council was created in 1997. It meets regularly when the legislature is not in session. At most meetings, DSS and DOL update members on the activities in their respective programs. Additionally, DOL publishes a monthly report, *At A Squint*, which provides demographic information on JFES participants, including average wages, types of work activities in which participants are engaged, and barriers to completing a JFES plan.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 13 Nay 5 (03/10/2009)