



General Assembly

February Session, 2010

Amendment

LCO No. 3950

HB0536003950HDO

Offered by:

REP. URBAN, 43rd Dist.

REP. JARMOC, 59th Dist.

To: Subst. House Bill No. 5360

File No. 324

Cal. No. 179

"AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDREN IN THE RECESSION."

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and substitute the
2 following in lieu thereof:

3 "Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Child Poverty and
4 Prevention Council, established pursuant to section 4-67x of the
5 general statutes, shall constitute the children in the recession
6 leadership team to make recommendations for the state's emergency
7 response to children affected by the recession. The council may
8 establish a subcommittee to act for it under this section. For purposes
9 of this section, the council or a subcommittee established under this
10 subsection shall meet quarterly if the unemployment rate of the state,
11 as reported by the Labor Commissioner, is eight per cent or greater for
12 the preceding three months.

13 (b) The council shall work in consultation with other government
14 agencies to develop and promote policies, practices and procedures,
15 within available appropriations, that (1) mitigate the long-term impact

16 of economic recessions on children; (2) provide appropriate assistance
17 and resources to families to minimize the number of children who
18 enter poverty as a result of the recession; and (3) reduce human and
19 fiscal costs of recessions, including foreclosures, child hunger, family
20 violence, school failure, youth runaways, homelessness, child abuse
21 and neglect.

22 (c) For purposes of this section, the council, within available
23 appropriations, shall utilize strategies to mitigate the impact of the
24 recession on children that include, but are not limited to, the following:
25 (1) Resource information sharing and strategic planning to address
26 emergency response to children in the recession; (2) training of
27 pertinent personnel on the availability of services, access points and
28 interventions across agencies, including child trauma treatment; (3)
29 development of linkages between job training and education programs
30 and services; (4) development and implementation of efforts to
31 coordinate outreach and improve access to services, including the
32 establishment of multiple enrollment sites where feasible; (5) reduction
33 of current response times to clients for safety net programs, including,
34 but not limited to, the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
35 Program, the federal Special Supplemental Food Program for Women,
36 Infants and Children, the National School Lunch Program and other
37 federal child nutrition programs, the temporary family assistance
38 program, the child care subsidy program, heating and rental
39 assistance, eviction prevention services and free and reduced
40 preschool meal programs; (6) identification of appropriate revisions to
41 regulations and procedures to be streamlined to increase program
42 access; (7) maximization of availability of targeted case management
43 and intervention services; (8) assessment of the unique needs of
44 children of soldiers serving or returning from war or other military
45 service; and (9) maximization of all federal funding opportunities.

46 (d) Not later than January 1, 2011, a representative of the council
47 shall appear before a joint meeting of the select committee of the
48 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children
49 and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having

50 cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of
51 state agencies and human services and make a report on (1) progress in
52 implementing the provisions of this section; and (2) other government
53 actions taken to reduce the impact of the recession on children and
54 families in the state.

55 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of Social
56 Services, in consultation with the Labor Department and the
57 Departments of Education, Public Health and Children and Families,
58 shall seek, within available appropriations, to promote efficiency,
59 reduce costs and administrative error rates and simplify the
60 application process for families eligible for benefits by streamlining
61 and integrating public information and access to programs.

62 (b) For the purpose of subsection (a) of this section, the Department
63 of Social Services shall develop, within available appropriations, a plan
64 for a comprehensive state service approach that may include (1) the
65 development and promotion of a single, simplified, on-line application
66 and enrollment process for programs administered by the Department
67 of Social Services that serve children or families; (2) the use of the
68 Internet to develop and increase public access to on-line screening
69 tools, benefit calculators and on-line applications that facilitate prompt
70 access to programs administered by the Department of Social Services
71 and benefit information; and (3) the promotion of access to direct
72 assistance with application and enrollment processes through
73 community-based organizations. Not later than January 31, 2011, the
74 department shall submit the plan to the joint standing committee of the
75 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human
76 services and to the select committee of the General Assembly having
77 cognizance of matters relating to children. The department may
78 consult with and accept donations from philanthropic organizations to
79 accomplish the purposes of this section.

80 (c) The Department of Social Services shall develop, in accordance
81 with the provisions of federal law, a client-friendly application process
82 which shall not require applications to be resubmitted if a family

83 applied for services and, not more than thirty days after the date the
84 application was submitted, the family experienced a change in
85 circumstances or the program closed to intake applications and then
86 reopened.

87 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Department of Social
88 Services shall provide timely public notice if, for any reason, the child
89 care subsidy program closes intake. The department shall notify the
90 public if the program eligibility or status has been altered. Any change
91 in eligibility or program terms, except opening of the program or
92 expansion in eligibility, shall be effective not less than thirty days after
93 public notice of such change.

94 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of Social
95 Services, in consultation with appropriate state agencies and within
96 available appropriations, shall (1) allocate existing funding and
97 resources to ensure the availability of homeless shelters that accept
98 intact families or that assist families to find adequate alternative
99 arrangements that allow the family to remain together; (2) review
100 program eligibility requirements and other policies to ensure that
101 unaccompanied homeless children have access, to the fullest extent
102 practicable, to critical services that such children might otherwise have
103 been prevented from receiving due to age or guardianship
104 requirements; and (3) work, in accordance with state and federal law,
105 to seek relief from income garnishment orders through the appropriate
106 judicial authority if it is deemed appropriate to be in the best interests
107 of children and families.

108 (b) The Department of Education, in consultation with appropriate
109 departments, shall seek full utilization of the federal McKinney-Vento
110 Homeless Assistance Act to protect children falling into homelessness
111 from school failure and dropping out of school and to improve access
112 to higher education.

113 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Departments of Social
114 Services, Public Health and Education shall collaborate to decrease

115 hunger resulting from the recession by coordinating, within available
116 appropriations, state-wide public access, information and outreach,
117 and promoting, within available appropriations, cross-referral and
118 collocation of entry points and application processes for the federal
119 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the federal Special
120 Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children and
121 increase federal reimbursements.

122 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2010*) (a) The Department of
123 Education shall administer, within available appropriations, a child
124 nutrition outreach program to increase (1) participation in the federal
125 School Breakfast Program, federal Summer Food Service Program and
126 federal Child and Adult Care Food Program; and (2) federal
127 reimbursement for such programs.

128 (b) The child nutrition outreach program shall:

129 (1) Encourage schools to (A) participate in the federal School
130 Breakfast Program; (B) employ innovative breakfast service methods
131 where students eat their breakfast in their classrooms or elsewhere
132 after school starts, rather than only before school and only in the
133 cafeteria; and (C) apply to the in-classroom breakfast grant program
134 pursuant to section 10-215g of the general statutes;

135 (2) (A) Encourage local and regional school districts to sponsor
136 Summer Food Service Program sites; (B) recruit other sponsors of such
137 sites; and (C) make grants to site sponsors to assist them in increasing
138 child participation;

139 (3) Encourage day care centers to participate in the Child and Adult
140 Care Food Program; and

141 (4) Publicize the availability of federally-funded child nutrition
142 programs throughout the state.

143 Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of Social
144 Services shall maximize federal fund opportunities from the

145 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund
146 established pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
147 P.L. 111-5, in order to assist families facing unemployment, housing
148 crises, increasing debt, homelessness or other hardships. The
149 department shall seek to utilize, in accordance with the provisions of
150 federal law:

151 (1) The nonrecurrent, short-term benefits category of the Temporary
152 Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund for eligible purposes,
153 including, but not limited to, housing, transportation, work expenses,
154 family safety, low birth weight reduction, food and nutrition. The
155 benefits funded pursuant to this subdivision may include, but not be
156 limited to, mortgage assistance, eviction relief, car repair, work clothes,
157 domestic violence services, home visitation and on-the-job training;
158 and

159 (2) The subsidized employment category of the Temporary
160 Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund for eligible purposes,
161 including, but not limited to, youth employment programs and the
162 alleviation of specific labor shortages and state worker shortages
163 where the jobs created help families apply for state services.

164 (b) The department shall work with the private sector, including
165 philanthropic, business and nonprofit agencies as well as any
166 consortium of such groups, for eligible purposes and as third-party
167 participants to qualify for, access and maximize federal funding from
168 said emergency fund through donation, in-kind spending and training
169 of subsidized workers.

170 (c) The department shall implement the provisions of this section
171 within available resources.

172 Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not more than sixty days after
173 the effective date of this section, the Department of Social Services,
174 within available appropriations and to the extent permitted by federal
175 law, shall establish and implement a procedure for the following
176 modification in the temporary assistance of needy families program

177 whenever the state unemployment rate, as reported by the Labor
178 Commissioner, is eight per cent or greater for the preceding three
179 months. The Jobs First program shall permit and encourage parents to
180 pursue education and training and shall approve, as work activities,
181 two-and four-year degree programs. A recipient shall be eligible for
182 assistance under this modification for at least six months even if the
183 state unemployment rate for subsequent quarters is not eight per cent
184 or greater. The department may seek federal support to pay for such
185 modifications through funds provided from the federal Temporary
186 Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund.

187 Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Department of Public
188 Health, within available appropriations and in consultation with the
189 Departments of Social Services and Education, shall seek to reduce the
190 incidence of low birth weight among infants and reduce the cost to the
191 state from unnecessary hospitalizations of such infants by (1)
192 maximizing coenrollment in the federal Special Supplemental Food
193 Program for Women, Infants and Children and Medicaid for all
194 eligible women; (2) encouraging tobacco cessation programs targeted
195 to pregnant women; and (3) promoting the use of the centering
196 pregnancy model of prenatal care. The department may recover the
197 costs of implementing the provisions of this section through funds
198 available from the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund established under
199 section 4-28f of the general statutes and the federal Temporary
200 Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund.

201 Sec. 10. Section 10a-194j of the 2010 supplement to the general
202 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
203 (*Effective from passage*):

204 (a) As used in this section:

205 (1) "Credit Union League of Connecticut Student Loan Program" or
206 "program" means a program operated by the Credit Union League of
207 Connecticut that offers low interest rate loans to students who
208 experience difficulty obtaining financing for post-secondary education

209 because of more restrictive underwriting criteria, reduced access to
210 home equity loans or decreased market value of homes;

211 (2) "Eligible student" means (A) any student enrolled in an
212 accredited institution of higher education in this state, or (B) any
213 resident of this state enrolled in an accredited institution of higher
214 education;

215 (3) "Participating credit union" means any credit union in this state
216 participating in the program; and

217 (4) "Qualifying student loan" means a loan to an eligible student that
218 is (A) originated by a participating credit union; (B) subject to the
219 participating credit union's underwriting standards applicable to
220 student loans; (C) subject to an interest rate not exceeding six per cent
221 per annum for loans with a one-year deferral of commencement of
222 payment of interest or subject to an interest rate not exceeding five and
223 three-quarters per cent per annum for loans without any deferral of
224 commencement of payment of interest; and (D) disbursed on or before
225 December 31, [2009] 2012, or disbursed at a later date if approved by
226 action of the board of directors of the authority.

227 (b) The Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority
228 shall allocate from its reserves an amount not to exceed three million
229 five hundred thousand dollars in the aggregate for purposes of
230 guaranteeing qualifying student loans under the Credit Union League
231 of Connecticut Student Loan Program. The funds so allocated shall be
232 held by the authority in a separate account to be known as the "Credit
233 Union League Student Loan Program protection account" and such
234 funds shall revert to the authority's general reserves at such time as the
235 funds are no longer needed to be held for the program. Said account
236 shall be used to provide a first loss guarantee to participating credit
237 unions not to exceed twenty per cent of the outstanding principal
238 amount of qualifying student loans originated by such credit unions.
239 The amount of any individual loan guaranteed by the authority shall
240 not exceed twenty per cent of the original principal balance thereof.

241 Sec. 11. (*Effective from passage*) The Commission on Children, in
242 consultation with the private sector, shall research the viability of
243 enacting a state children and the recession fund that would provide
244 funds and low-interest loans to families facing short-term crisis in
245 housing, utilities, hunger and unemployment. Not later than January
246 1, 2011, the commission shall report, in accordance with the provisions
247 of section 11-4a of the general statutes, its findings to the joint standing
248 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
249 relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies.

250 Sec. 12. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) The Commission on Children
251 shall coordinate information on youth leadership opportunities that
252 keep youth engaged in the community. The commission shall inform
253 the General Assembly and the public of such opportunities.

254 Sec. 13. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) No cause of action or liability
255 shall arise against the state, any of its agencies or subdivisions, or any
256 state official, employee or agent, for failure to comply with the
257 provisions of sections 1 to 9, inclusive, of this act and section 10a-194j
258 of the general statutes, as amended by this act.

259 Sec. 14. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Department of Social
260 Services shall submit a report on the policies and interventions
261 promoted pursuant to sections 2 and 3 of this act, subsection (a) of
262 section 4 of this act and sections 7 and 8 of this act. The report shall
263 include key outcome indicators and measures and set benchmarks for
264 evaluating progress in accomplishing the purposes of said sections.
265 The department shall submit the report on or before January 1, 2011, to
266 the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
267 cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of
268 state agencies, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the
269 general statutes.

270 (b) The Department of Education shall submit a report on the
271 policies and interventions promoted pursuant to subsection (b) of
272 section 4 and section 6 of this act. The report shall include key outcome

273 indicators and measures and set benchmarks for evaluating progress
 274 in accomplishing the purposes of said sections. The department shall
 275 submit the report on or before January 1, 2011, to the joint standing
 276 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
 277 relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, in
 278 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

279 (c) The Department of Public Health shall submit a report on the
 280 policies and interventions promoted pursuant to section 9 of this act.
 281 The report shall include key outcome indicators and measures and set
 282 benchmarks for evaluating progress in accomplishing the purposes of
 283 said section. The department shall submit the report on or before
 284 January 1, 2011, to the joint standing committee of the General
 285 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and
 286 the budgets of state agencies, in accordance with the provisions of
 287 section 11-4a of the general statutes."

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2010</i>	New section
Sec. 7	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 8	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 9	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 10	<i>from passage</i>	10a-194j
Sec. 11	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 12	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 13	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 14	<i>from passage</i>	New section