



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 81

February Session, 2014

House Bill No. 5224

House of Representatives, March 25, 2014

The Committee on Aging reported through REP. SERRA of the 33rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT INCREASING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO GRANDPARENTS
AND OTHER RELATIVES RAISING CHILDREN.***

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

1 Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 17b-112 of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
3 *1, 2014*):

4 (a) (1) The Department of Social Services shall administer a
5 temporary family assistance program under which cash assistance
6 shall be provided to eligible families in accordance with the temporary
7 assistance for needy families program, established pursuant to the
8 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of
9 1996. The Commissioner of Social Services may operate portions of the
10 temporary family assistance program as a solely state-funded
11 program, separate from the federal temporary assistance for needy
12 families program, if the commissioner determines that doing so will
13 enable the state to avoid fiscal penalties under the temporary
14 assistance for needy families program. Families receiving assistance

15 under the solely state-funded portion of the temporary family
16 assistance program shall be subject to the same conditions of eligibility
17 as those receiving assistance under the federal temporary assistance for
18 needy families program. Under the temporary family assistance
19 program, benefits shall be provided to a family for not longer than
20 twenty-one months, except as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of
21 this section. For the purpose of calculating said twenty-one-month
22 time limit, months of assistance received on and after January 1, 1996,
23 pursuant to time limits under the aid to families with dependent
24 children program, shall be included. For purposes of this section,
25 "family" means one or more individuals who apply for or receive
26 assistance together under the temporary family assistance program. If
27 the commissioner determines that federal law allows individuals not
28 otherwise in an eligible covered group for the temporary family
29 assistance program to become covered, such family may also, at the
30 discretion of the commissioner, be composed of [(1)] (A) a pregnant
31 woman, or [(2)] (B) a parent, both parents or other caretaker relative
32 and at least one child who is under the age of eighteen, or who is
33 under the age of nineteen and a full-time student in a secondary school
34 or its equivalent. A caretaker relative shall be related to the child or
35 children by blood, marriage or adoption or shall be the legal guardian
36 of such a child or pursuing legal proceedings necessary to achieve
37 guardianship. If the commissioner elects to allow state eligibility
38 consistent with any change in federal law, the commissioner may
39 administratively transfer any qualifying family cases under the cash
40 assistance portion of the state-administered general assistance
41 program to the temporary family assistance program without regard
42 to usual eligibility and enrollment procedures. If such families become
43 an ineligible coverage group under the federal law, the commissioner
44 shall administratively transfer such families back to the cash assistance
45 portion of the state-administered general assistance program without
46 regard to usual eligibility and enrollment procedures to the degree that
47 such families are eligible for the state program.

48 (2) To the extent permissible under federal law, the payment
49 standard for a family receiving temporary family assistance pursuant

50 to this section in which the head of the household is a nonparent
51 caretaker relative and the legal guardian of a child shall be equal to
52 seventy-five per cent of the prevailing monthly foster care rate paid by
53 the Department of Children and Families for the equivalent number of
54 children.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2014	17b-112(a)

AGE *Joint Favorable*

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:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 15 \$	FY 16 \$
Social Services, Dept.	GF - Cost	\$6.8 million to \$70.7 million	\$6.8 million to \$70.7 million

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill will result in a cost to the Department of Social Services, Temporary Family Assistance Program (TFA) to increase the payment standard for child only assistance units' rate to 75% of a foster care rate. The bill does not specify which category of foster care reimbursement rate the TFA payment standard will be indexed to. Assuming the minimum and the median monthly foster care rate, the bill will result in an increased annual cost to the state of between \$6.8 and \$70.7 million. The table below reflects the estimated annual impact:

	Average Monthly Rate ¹	Average Monthly Rate Increase to 75% of Foster Care Rate	Estimated Annual Increase to DSS TFA Program
TFA Rate	\$495	N/A	N/A
Foster Care Rate- Minimum	\$781	\$950	\$6,486,073
Foster Care Rate- Median	\$1,481	\$986	\$70,751,204

¹ Average FY 14 year to date monthly foster care rates as of February 2, 2014. Maximum average monthly foster care rate is \$14,054. TFA are projected average cost per case for FY 15.

The actual cost will depend on two factors 1) the number of individuals impacted and 2) the amount of the monthly foster care reimbursement.

The TFA program has on average approximately 18,070 cases per month.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 5224*****AN ACT INCREASING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER RELATIVES RAISING CHILDREN.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill increases the temporary family assistance payment to families whose head of household is a nonparent caretaker relative (e.g., grandparent) and the legal guardian of a child from the temporary assistance rate to 75% of the prevailing monthly foster care rate for the equivalent number of children. It also eliminates regional variations in the payments to such families.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2014

TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE AND FOSTER CARE PAYMENTS

The temporary family assistance program provides cash payments and other assistance to families meeting specific income and other requirements. The current rate paid to families by the temporary assistance program varies by family size and geographical region (A, B, or C).

The monthly foster care reimbursement rate depends on the age of the child and whether the child is designated as medically complex, in addition to other factors. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) uses 13 different rate designations. The payment does not vary based on where the family lives. Presumably, the prevailing rate paid under the bill is the rate a child would receive based on his or her DCF categorization.

Table 1 compares Connecticut's current monthly temporary family assistance rates to 75% of the foster care reimbursement rate for two

family sizes in different regions.

Table 1: Comparison of Reimbursement Rates for Two Family Sizes in Different Regions

Family Size	Geographical Region	Current Law	Bill
		Temporary Family Assistance Payment	75% of Foster Rate as Proposed by Bill*
Family of 2 (1 adult, 1 child)	A	\$544.00	\$585.43
	B	\$470.00	
	C	\$470.00	
Family of 4 (2 adults, 2 children)	A	\$786.00	\$1,170.86
	B	\$677.00	
	C	\$660.00	
*Current foster rate is \$780.57 per child age birth to 5.			

COMMITTEE ACTION

Aging Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 12 Nay 0 (03/11/2014)