



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 220

February Session, 2022

Senate Bill No. 285

Senate, March 30, 2022

The Committee on Human Services reported through SEN. MOORE of the 22nd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING TIME LIMITS IN THE TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DURING A STATE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY.

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

1 Section 1. Subsection (c) of section 17b-112 of the 2022 supplement to
2 the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
3 thereof (*Effective from passage*):

4 (c) A family who is subject to time-limited benefits may petition the
5 Commissioner of Social Services for six-month extensions of such
6 benefits. The commissioner shall grant not more than two extensions to
7 such family who has made a good faith effort to comply with the
8 requirements of the program and despite such effort has a total family
9 income at a level below the payment standard, or has encountered
10 circumstances preventing employment including, but not limited to: (1)
11 Domestic violence or physical harm to such family's children; or (2)
12 other circumstances beyond such family's control. The commissioner
13 shall disregard ninety dollars of earned income in determining

14 applicable family income. The commissioner may grant a subsequent
15 six-month extension if each adult in the family meets one or more of the
16 following criteria: (A) The adult is precluded from engaging in
17 employment activities due to domestic violence or another reason
18 beyond the adult's control; (B) the adult has two or more substantiated
19 barriers to employment including, but not limited to, the lack of
20 available child care, substance abuse or addiction, severe mental or
21 physical health problems, one or more severe learning disabilities,
22 domestic violence or a child who has a serious physical or behavioral
23 health problem; (C) the adult is working thirty-five or more hours per
24 week, is earning at least the minimum wage and continues to earn less
25 than the family's temporary family assistance payment standard; or (D)
26 the adult is employed and works less than thirty-five hours per week
27 due to (i) a documented medical impairment that limits the adult's
28 hours of employment, provided the adult works the maximum number
29 of hours that the medical condition permits, or (ii) the need to care for a
30 disabled member of the adult's household, provided the adult works the
31 maximum number of hours the adult's caregiving responsibilities
32 permit. Families receiving temporary family assistance shall be notified
33 by the department of the right to petition for such extensions.
34 Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, the commissioner shall
35 not provide benefits under the state's temporary family assistance
36 program to a family that is subject to the twenty-one month benefit limit
37 and has received benefits beginning on or after October 1, 1996, if such
38 benefits result in that family's receiving more than sixty months of time-
39 limited benefits unless that family experiences domestic violence, as
40 defined in Section 402(a)(7)(B), P.L. 104-193. For the purpose of
41 calculating said sixty-month limit: (I) A month shall count toward the
42 limit if the family receives assistance for any day of the month, provided
43 any months of temporary family assistance received during [the] a state
44 public health emergency [declared by Governor Ned Lamont]
45 including, but not limited to, any such emergency declared by the
46 Governor or the General Assembly related to the COVID-19 pandemic,
47 [shall not be included] as defined in section 4-216a, may be excluded at
48 the discretion of the commissioner, in consultation with the Secretary of

49 the Office of Policy and Management, and (II) a month in which a family
50 receives temporary assistance for needy families benefits that are issued
51 from a jurisdiction other than Connecticut shall count toward the limit.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	17b-112(c)

HS *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: See Below

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill specifies that months in which Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) benefits are received during a state public health emergency, regardless of who declared such emergency, may not count towards the TFA time limit of 21-months (with extensions). While this conforms to current practice, it potentially precludes future savings to the extent the time-limit would have otherwise been applicable if a state public health emergency was declared by someone other than Governor Lamont.

The Out Years

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

OLR Bill Analysis**SB 285*****AN ACT CONCERNING TIME LIMITS IN THE TEMPORARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM DURING A STATE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY.*****SUMMARY**

By law, Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) provides cash assistance to families, generally subject to a 21-month time limit with up to two six-month extensions. Current law excludes from this time limit any months of TFA benefits received during a public health emergency declared by Governor Ned Lamont. This bill instead allows the Department of Social Services commissioner to exclude from the time limit any months of benefits received during a state public health emergency, including emergencies declared by the governor or the legislature related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The commissioner may do so at her discretion, in consultation with the Office of Policy and Management secretary.

Existing law also exempts certain families from the time limit (e.g., a family with a needy caretaker relative who is incapacitated or of an advanced age).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

COMMITTEE ACTION

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 13 Nay 7 (03/17/2022)