

HCS HB 1311 -- HAND-UP PROGRAM

SPONSOR: Quade

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Budget by a vote of 28 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Legislative Oversight Committee by a vote of 11 to 0.

This bill reauthorizes the Hand-Up Program, which allows recipients of child care subsidy benefits to receive transitional child care benefits without the requirement that such applicant first be eligible for full child care benefits or any other tier of child care benefits. This program is a pilot program for Jackson and Greene counties and will begin on July 1, 2019.

The program is designed to prevent a person who needs child care benefits from suddenly losing child care assistance should his or her income rise above the full child care allowable income, but be within the new transitional income limits established through the annual appropriation process.

The Children's Division must track recipients of the Hand-Up Program and annually report statistics on the program to the General Assembly.

The provisions of the bill will expire on August 28, 2021.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that finding quality affordable child care and keeping it stable as incomes increase, is a major problem for families living in poverty. Policies need to reflect the true cost of living and government assistance needs to serve as a temporary fix to self-sufficiency. This bill is designed to minimize the "cliff effect" created when a single parent increases their income when trying to improve their finances. The cliff effect calculation is based on household income from wages and social programs minus basic expenses. The pilot program includes an analysis of the implementation of the pilot program to see if it should be expanded across the state and to include other types of benefits.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Quade; Meghan Roetto; Trenton Sims; Amy Blansit; Empower Missouri; Missouri Kidsfirst; and Kids Win Missouri.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill provided background information about income eligibility concerns across the state and for different benefit programs.

Testifying on the bill was the Department of Social Services.