

HCS SS SB 82 -- PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

SPONSOR: Coleman (Kelly 141)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 6 to 3. Motion to "Do Pass- failed" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote 2 to 6. Voted "To Reconsider and Do Pass" by a vote of 7 to 1 by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for SB 82.

This bill establishes, subject to appropriations, a transitional benefits program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Such transitional benefits shall be designed to assist recipients of such programs whose monthly income has exceeded the maximum allowable income for program eligibility or \$6,250, adjusted for CPI, whichever is lower, to continue receiving reduced benefits, as described in the bill. Recipients of transitional benefits shall comply with all requirements of each program for which they are eligible, including work requirements. Transitional benefits received under this bill shall not be included in the lifetime limit for TANF benefits.

This bill modifies provisions relating to transitional child care benefits by expanding the Hand-Up pilot program statewide for individuals whose incomes exceed the maximum allowable amount for the full child care subsidy benefit. Transitional child care benefits shall be reduced benefits determined on a sliding scale as the recipient's income increases, with the recipient paying the remainder of the fee to the child care provider. Additionally, this bill removes the expiration date of the Hand-Up program.

As specified in this bill, the Department of Social Services shall limit any initial application for SNAP, TANF, child care assistance, or any medical assistance or health insurance program to a concise, non- duplicative, and easily accessible form on the Department's website. Program participants who are required to complete a periodic eligibility review form may submit such form as an attachment to their Missouri state individual income tax return if the eligibility review form is due at the same time as the tax return. Such eligibility forms shall also be made accessible on the Department of Revenue's website.

This bill repeals provisions of law allowing for individuals convicted of certain drug offenses to participate in SNAP only if

certain conditions are met. As specified in this bill, individuals convicted of a state or federal felony drug offense shall not be excluded from SNAP for such conviction.

Finally, this bill makes the unlawful receipt by sale or transfer by sale of public assistance benefits or electronic benefits transfer (EBT) cards illegal by modifying existing provisions relating to the offenses of unlawful receipt or unlawful transfer of public assistance benefits or EBT cards.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the Senate Perfected version of the bill.

**PROPONENTS:** Supporters say that the current program is trapping people into poverty and discouraging them from working to advance in their careers. The bill makes the system more efficient and less complicated. This will also make the state more aligned with most of the country when it comes to lifting the permanent ban for drug offenders. This bill will indirectly help families support each other and will benefit both children and adults in the household.

Testifying in person for the bill were Senator Coleman; Greater KC Food Policy Coalition; Missouri Catholic Conference; Paraquad, Inc.; Missouri Appleseed; Missouri Budget Project; Mallory Rusch, Empower Missouri; Catholic Charities of St. Louis; Jack Gamble, Missouri Alliance of YMCA's; Missouri Center for Public Health Excellence, Health Forward Foundation; Kids Win Missouri; and the, Missouri Coalition for Children.

**OPPONENTS:** Those who oppose the bill say that this bill has good intentions but will not lead to good outcomes. The focus should be on other methods of getting people into the workforce. Also, cutting down the paperwork for applications will make it easier for bad actors to take advantage of the program.

Testifying in person against the bill was the Opportunity Solutions Project .

**OTHERS:** Others testifying on the bill say that a report was made that gathered research on public assistance and analyzed the Department of Social Services and was sent to the Department in 2020 to streamline its forms based on the recommendations. The report reinforces that simplifying the form would still allow them to stay federally compliant.

Testifying in person on the bill was the Missouri Foundation for Health.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under "House Testimony on Senate Bills" on the House website.