

ASSEMBLY POLICY AND REGULATORY OVERSIGHT  
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

**ASSEMBLY, No. 14**

with committee amendments

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: DECEMBER 5, 1996

The Assembly Policy and Regulatory Oversight Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 14.

As amended by the committee, this bill is part of a legislative package which establishes the "Work First New Jersey" program in the Department of Human Services as the State's consolidated public assistance program, replacing the current programs of aid to families with dependent children, (AFDC), AFDC emergency assistance, general assistance (GA), GA emergency assistance, the GA employability program, and the Family Development Initiative.

The bill provides that a person who is a care giver to a dependent child who is that care giver's legal or blood relative (other than the child's natural or adoptive stepparent) shall be evaluated to determine whether that person is eligible for Work First New Jersey benefits if that care giver's income is not in excess of 150% of the poverty level. Also, the bill clarifies the eligibility of children in households with stepparents.

The bill requires the program to provide supportive services to program recipients, including transportation and work expense vouchers, as well as an extension of Medicaid benefits and a child care subsidy for up to two years for households that become ineligible for cash assistance because of income from employment.

The bill also specifies that single adults and couples without dependent children shall not be eligible for medical assistance for inpatient or outpatient hospital care or long-term care under the program, except that medical assistance shall be provided for:

(1) inpatient hospitalization costs for a recipient of general public assistance pursuant to P.L.1947, c.156 (C.44:8-107 et seq.) who is admitted to a special hospital licensed by the Department of Health and Senior Services which is not eligible to receive a charity care subsidy from the Health Care Subsidy Fund; (2) nursing home costs for a person residing in a non-Medicaid certified nursing facility prior to July 1, 1995, whose income is above the Medicaid institutional cap and who does not otherwise qualify for State-funded nursing home

care as a medically needy person; and (3) nursing home costs for an alien residing in a Medicaid certified nursing facility prior to the effective date of this act who is not Medicaid-eligible under Pub.L.104-193.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to report to the Legislature and Governor biennially on the program and to make certain quarterly reports available to the public.

The bill directs the Commissioner of Human Services to establish, by regulation, a standard of need and update that standard annually. The standard of need will serve as a benchmark against which the Legislature may decide on appropriations to fund cash assistance benefits to recipients.

Finally, the bill amends P.L.1994, c.182, the "motor voter" law, to update references in that law to reflect the Work First New Jersey program.

The committee amended the bill to provide:

- ! that an adult recipient who continues to be eligible for child care services following ineligibility for benefits, and an adult recipient who is employed but continues to receive benefits, shall pay a copay, in accordance with a sliding fee scale established by the commissioner, which shall be no greater than the child care copayment schedule established under N.J.A.C.10:81-14.18A;
- ! that a community college which provides campus-based child care and any work activity to a recipient as part of that recipient's individual responsibility plan receive a child care subsidy from the commissioner;
- ! that the commissioner initiate a study of the Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps program as a means of offering employment to economically disadvantaged youth, and submit a written report of his findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature by January 1, 1998; and
- ! a definition for "alternative work experience" and a revised definition for "community work experience," to clarify that these participants in these work experiences are not assigned to work for a private, for-profit employer. The definition for "work activity" was amended to remove the reference to "work experience" in that definition. These definitions are identical to these terms in Assembly Bill No. 12 of 1996.

Other committee amendments are technical in nature and intended to clarify certain provisions of the bill.