

Please sponsor Rep. Decker's Amendment #74 to Preserve a Lifeline for Children!

What are the biggest problems with the HWM welfare bill (H3737)?

- **Work requirements for parents with disabilities.** Allowing DTA (under a current or future Administration) to impose work requirements on 4,500 disabled parents, resulting in loss of benefits for the parents and their children, too.
- **Job search for applicants.** Requiring applicants to verify job search *before* benefits are approved without providing transportation, childcare, or any help with job search. Parents in crisis will not be able to meet this requirement, especially without the necessary supports. A similar provision raised the denial rate to 80% in PA.
- **No benefits for people who go off assistance and then reapply, unless they can show they complied with a plan that was done before they went off (perhaps years earlier).** Yet the bill provides no resources or assistance to help them complete the plan. Moreover, it is unrealistic to hold people accountable to plans while they are not getting support.
- **4-year college would no longer count as a work activity.** Federal law allows college to count for 12 months and longer if combined with another activity. A college degree is the path to financial stability. If a parent is in college at the time her family needs assistance, she should not be required to drop out.
- **Work requirements for pregnant women.** Currently exempt in the third trimester; HWM would allow the exemption only in the 30th week unless she can verify she did not quit a job without good cause or earlier with medical verification (complicating the determination of eligibility and putting the baby at risk).



Action for Boston Community Development	Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition
American Civil Liberties Union of Mass.	Massachusetts Association for Community Action
Black Ministerial Alliance of Greater Boston	Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
Coalition for Social Justice	Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Crittenton Women's Union	National Association of Social Workers, MA
Greater Boston Legal Services	Neighbor to Neighbor
Homes for Families	Poor People's United Fund
Jewish Community Relations Council	Progressive Massachusetts
Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy	Rosie's Place
	The Workforce Solutions Group

To co-sponsor the amendment addressing these problems in the HWM welfare bill, please contact the House Clerk's office.

For a more detailed explanation of the House Ways and Means bill and the amendment please contact Deborah Harris, Mass. Law Reform Institute, dharris@mlri.org, 617-538-1680 (cell), or Naomi Meyer, Greater Boston Legal Services, nmeyer@gbls.org, 617-980-1446 (cell).

Amendment #74

Welfare Protections

Representatives Decker of Cambridge, Balsler of Newton, Cullinane of Boston, Lawn of Watertown, Livingstone of Boston, Gordon of Bedford, Hecht of Watertown, Henriquez of Boston, Lewis of Winchester, Sciortino of Medford, Garballey of Arlington, Kaufman of Lexington, Keefe of Worcester, Farley-Bouvier of Pittsfield, Andrews of Orange, Rogers of Cambridge, Provost of Somerville, O'Day of West Boylston, Toomey of Cambridge, Fox of Boston, Benson of Lunenburg, Malia of Boston, Pignatelli of Lenox, Sannicandro of Ashland, Cabral of New Bedford, Smizik of Brookline and Vega of Holyoke move that the bill be amended by striking out subsections (a) and (b) of Section 13 chapter 118 of the General Laws as proposed to be added by SECTION 16 of the bill 2 and inserting in place thereof the following 2 subsections: -

(a) Subject to appropriation, the department shall provide resources and support for a job search program for applicants. Resources and supports provided by said program shall include but not be limited to: (i) a location reasonably accessible to the applicant equipped with the necessary tools and materials to perform the required job search and (ii) assistance with using job search tools, including specialized assistance for applicants who are not proficient in English or have difficulty reading or writing. Applicants shall be eligible for child care and transportation assistance if needed during the time the applicant is conducting the job search or interviews at the department or another designated location. No applicant shall be required to leave a child under age 13 or otherwise eligible for child care in the care of an unlicensed child care provider in order to conduct job search. Applicants who secure a job during the initial job search period shall be eligible for subsidized child care, transportation assistance, and deductions from earnings on the same basis as recipients, or, if not eligible for cash assistance because of earnings from a job secured during the application period, shall be eligible for subsidized child care if needed to maintain employment on the same basis as former recipient.

(b) (i) The department may require all applicants who are not working or otherwise participating in activities meeting the requirements of subsection (j) of section 110 of chapter 5 of the acts of 1995, as amended, to participate in the job search program established pursuant to subsection (a) prior to receiving cash assistance; provided however, that job search shall not be mandatory for an applicant who has good cause for not participating as defined in subsection (j) of said section 110, or is exempt under subsection (e) said section 110 or applying for an exemption. (ii) Applicants shall provide evidence of job search by verifying attendance at a job search program or by returning to the department a list of the potential employers contacted recently, the date of contact and the name and telephone number of the person with whom the applicant spoke, to the extent feasible. All initial job search documentation shall be signed by the applicant under the penalties of perjury. The number of potential employers to be contacted by the applicant shall be determined by the department. The department shall provide assistance in documenting job search to those applicants who need such assistance. An applicant shall provide the information before the applicant's case approval. An applicant required to conduct job search who fails to provide this information without good cause within 30 days of filing the application shall be determined to be ineligible. The department shall promulgate regulations in accordance with this subsection. The requirements of this subsection shall be deemed satisfied upon submission to the department of proof of job search activities issued by a 1-stop career center that is established under sections 160 to 168A, inclusive, of chapter 149.

And further amend the bill by striking out subsection (d) Section 13 of chapter 118 as proposed to be added by SECTION 16 and inserting in place thereof the following: -

(d) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, an education or training activity, for the purpose of meeting the work requirement, is defined as any education or training activity that meets the requirements of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 or any successor thereto, including activities required by or necessary for the successful completion of any such education and training program.

And further amend the bill by striking out, in lines 292 to 296, the words "Recipients who re-apply for benefits at any time after the first 24 month period shall be required to demonstrate a good faith attempt to meet their goals prior to receiving additional benefits. Recipients who fail to demonstrate a good faith attempt to meet all of their goals shall not receive additional benefits or an extension of benefits; provided, however, that such failure shall not prohibit a recipient from receiving benefits on behalf of a dependent child."

And further amend the bill in SECTION 20 by striking out lines 348 through 359 and inserting in place thereof the following:-

"(1) recipients who are disabled, as defined by the federal Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C.A. § 423 (d), and recipients who have been determined by the commonwealth's disability evaluation service to have a disability that meets or equals medical standards established by the department or substantially reduces the recipient's ability to support the recipient's children taking into account the individual's age, education and work experience; provided that in families with 2 parents, both parents are disabled. A recipient who requests an exemption under this clause shall, as a condition of continued eligibility for transitional aid to families with dependent children, apply for supplemental security income (SSI) and, if requested by the department, appeal a denial of SSI benefits. Recipients who do not comply with the department's request to apply for SSI or appeal a decision shall not be granted a work exemption under this clause.

And further amend the bill by striking out SECTION 21.