

CCWRO Weekly New Welfare News - #2002-15

April 22, 2002

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EDITORIAL

The Bush TANF Reauthorization plan passed the Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee and the Education and Workforce Committee's Workforce Subcommittee. Both Democrats and Republicans have been raving about the TANF plan. While Bush touts "we shall leave no child behind"; the plan does just that.

Politicians point out that the caseload has been reduced by 50%, while child poverty has been reduced by 3%. We are not sure how true those numbers are, but even if they are correct, that means that 47% of the people forced off public assistance are still in poverty.

Meanwhile, George Bush invited a few of the 3% who escaped poverty since the passage of TANF and paraded them among the press to get support for his "evil-doing" TANF proposal.

IN BRIEF

-- According to DSS, Alameda County is not processing IEVS abstracts as required by State regulations. On December 11, 2001, DSS informed Chet0 Hewitt, Agency Director of Alameda County Social Services Agency, that "The county must process the FTB, IRS and BEER responses within the 45-day timeframe." This is not the first time that Alameda County has been busted for breaking the law. The counties don't care and DSS does nothing to them. They keep on getting their big welfare checks (they call them pay-checks) while intentionally violating the law. Life is good for the Government - break the law with no consequences.

-- The Nationwide Prisoner Match Program reveals the names of persons incarcerated, but it does not state when they were released. Thus, the list can have people on it who are no longer incarcerated. On November 1, 2001, Chief Welfare Fraud Investigator of Riverside County Lauri Vivion asked DSS if the reports could show the release date. DSS responded in a letter dated December 20, 2001 that the system was designed for the Social Security Administration and it does not show when a person is released.

-- Sonoma County Interim Chief Welfare Fraud Investigator Robert Evans received some draft changes of Intentional Program Violation Hearings forms from DSS, the supervising agency of the Sonoma County Welfare Department. Mr. Evans did not like the changes in the forms. Thus, on 11/14/01 he wrote to State Welfare Fraud Chief stating that the changes that the State was making in the forms for IPV hearings "... are not necessary." After 45 days, Mr. Evans was informed by Gayle Wright that "While we don't agree with all of the proposed changes, we do think that some sections of the current forms need to be updated." It appears that the supervisors prevailed over their agents. What a relief.

DSS NEWS

-- DSS EMERGENCY REGULATIONS

"OAL FILE NUMBER: 02-0419-07EP

EMERGENCY REGULATION ACTION SUBMITTED TO OAL ON: 04/19/2002

AGENCY: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

TOPIC: Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)

SECTION AFFECTED: Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP), Sections 16-001 -- 44-304

Unless OAL approves or disapproves the regulations sooner, the last day for public comment is 04/24/2002

OAL DECISION DUE: no later than 04/29/2002

AGENCY CONTACT: Anthony J. Velasquez @ (916) 657-2586"

SOURCE: http://www.oal.ca.gov/emergency_now.htm

-- Partial Exemptions Stops the Clock

QUESTION: Napa County asked DSS "If a mandatory WtW participant provides verification (CW61) that they can only participate in WtW activities for 20 hours: would they be considered fully exempt and not have the "clock" tick OR would they be required to participate for the 20 hours and the clock continues to tick? I think they should participate for the 20 hours and their clock continues to tick..."

DSS ANSWER: DSS answered: ".... our regulations do not allow for partial exemptions. The participant would be exempt and the clock would stop...If you would like to discuss this further, please call me at 916-654-1394."

-- Verifying Unfitness for Exemption from Food Stamp ABAWDS

On 11/26/01, FNS asked DSS: "A county wants to know if a statement from a chiropractor can be used to verify the work registration and/or ABAWDS unfitness exemption. 7CFR 273.7(b)(1)(ii)"

DSS ANSWER: "I based my interpretation of the regulations mentioned, I would say yes; a statement from a chiropractor can be used to verify the work registration and/or ABAWD unfitness exemption."

TANF REAUTHORIZATION - House Subcommittees Move the Bush Mean-Spirited Plan Forward

April 18, 2002 H.R. 4092, Working Toward Independence Act of 2002 moved to the Full Committee, as amended by a vote of 9-7. The Committee bill, supported by Republicans and opposed by Democrats, would tell States what they can and cannot do. These same Republicans yell "Get government off the people's back"- except when it comes to impoverished families where they say, "Papa government knows what's best for you". As far as they're concerned, "One size fits all-- 40 hours a week and 70% participation."

The Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Ways and Means Committee marked up H.R. 4090, the "Personal Responsibility, Work, and Family Promotion Act of 2002" on Thursday, April 18, at 11:00 am. The Bill was passed with Republican votes along partisan lines as it passed the Workforce Subcommittee.

Both bills will go to their full committees.

STATISTICS OF THE WEEK

-- Time on Aid

New data published by DSS entitled, CalWORKs Characteristics Report for 2000 (Table 33a), reveals that 60% of the cases have been on aid for more than 5 years. 56% of the single-parent families were on aid for more than 5 years, while 65% of the child-only cases were on aid for more than 5 years.

-- Ethnicity of Caseload Over Five Years and Less than Five Years (Table 38a)

MORE than five years:

Hispanic - 29.2%
White- 28.9%
African - 20.9%
Asian- 19.7%
Other - 1.3%

LESS than five years:

Hispanic - 36.3%
White- 32.1%
African - 21%
Asian- 8.9%
Other - 1.7%

Source: <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/research/res/pdf/CalWKsCharFFY2000.pdf>

-- CWD VICTIM OF THE WEEK

Ms. S. from Sacramento County has a family of six. In April she received a letter from her eligibility worker stating that her food stamps would be reduced. The notice showed the computation of the food stamps, included Ms. S's income for her family size, and showed the allowance for a standard deduction of \$134. The remaining amount was used as income. The worker did not allow housing deductions or homeless assistance deductions. Ms. S. did have an address and obviously paid rent, otherwise her income would have reflected in-kind income for Ms. S's household size. (CalWORKs provides that if a family receives free rent, then the welfare check goes down because the free rent is considered "in-kind income"). Given the fact that there was no in-kind income, then the assistance unit either has housing costs or is homeless. It appears that this was too much thinking for this worker, thus, she took the easy way out and didn't allow any housing deductions. And now you know why California has a high food stamp error rate.

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