

CCWRO Weekly New Welfare News - #2002-17

May 6, 2002

HEADLINES

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IN BRIEF

On September 4, 2001, a final report by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. for USDA on Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs), a study about the impact of three-month time limits for food stamps during a 36 month period, was released. The report concluded that half of all participants subject to time limits were meeting the work requirement. Half of them were getting a pay check, in that they were performing "paid work", while the other half were performing "unpaid labor" or what is more commonly known as "involuntary servitude duty" or "slavery for food stamps."

DSS NEWS

-- NEW DSS REGULATION PROPOSED

Electronic benefits transfer (EBT) regulations - ORD #0202-04 -These are emergency regulations to implement electronic benefits transfer of cash aid.

The public comment period for this package will close on June 21, 2002 at 5:00p.m -

You can get a copy of the regulations by going to:

http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/ord/Electronic_637.htm

Written testimony can be submitted through e-mail at the web address above.

-- SUPPORTIVE SERVICES WORKGROUP MEETS ON 5/2/02

Bruce Wagstaff, Deputy Director of Welfare programs for DSS has set up a workgroup of advocates and county representatives. The goal of the group is to ensure that necessary supportive services are offered and made available in a timely fashion to eligible clients. The group will be meeting again on 7/9/02 and 9/6/02 from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM in Sacramento.

The next meeting of the group will focus on the best way to inform Welfare to Work participants of the availability of supportive services and will look at transportation. CCWRO will be setting up a conference call with interested welfare advocates during June, 2002. Those interested in participating in the conference call please e-mail CCWRO (ccwro@aol.com) indicating your desire to be on the Supportive Services Workgroup Conference Call. The advocates on the workgroup need and want to get input from other folks.

STATISTIC OF THE WEEK

This week we are looking at the sanction rate in California. Yes, California's welfare system had a nice Christmas present for CalWORKs recipients this year - a 10% increase in sanctions from the previous year.

The 1998 changes in the sanction system, which were carefully designed by the California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), and **OPPOSED only** by CCWRO, are bringing joy to CWDA and sadness to poor families and children of California with a 25% to 40% reduction in already low welfare benefits.

This week we will give you the county-by-county numbers.

Month/Year	Total Up Unduplicated Participants	Total Sanctions	% of Sanctions upon undupl. Participants
Jan-00	190502	41167	22%
Jan-01	185452	37309	20%
Jan-02	184115	54992	30%

TANF REAUTHORIZATION NEWS-

-- OVERVIEW : TANF reauthorization legislation is moving. To date there are six (6) bills and the Bush Proposal. H.R. 4090/4092 (Herger, R-CA; McKeon, R-CA) H.R. 3625 (Cardin, D-MD) H.R. 3113 (Mink, D-HI) S. 2052 (Rockefeller, D-WV) H.R. 4210 (Roukema, R-NJ; Tierney, D-MA)

The Bush Plan and the House Bills, HR 4090/4092 will keep the funding at the current level.

-- COLA FOR TANF: The House Democratic Bill would provide the States with a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) each year, but there is no requirement that the COLA trickle down to the poor families of America. As the TANF history over the six years has

shown, most States, even with millions of unspent money, do not give a COLA to the poor families, and some have even reduced benefits.

-- MORE MONEY FOR TANF: The Mink Bill, will give States an additional \$2 billion over six (6) years without any requirement that the increased funding trickle down to the poor families and children of America. Most likely States will use it to hire more bureaucrats to sanction more poor families for alleged failure to perform unpaid labor duty for the local and state welfare bureaucrats.

-- TANF BONUSES FOR BUREAUCRATS: Most of the bills continue the High Performance Bonuses that States get, but there are no bonuses for any High Performance TANF participants. It looks the bosses get the big bucks while the little people performing the unpaid labor for the State Welfare Bosses get no bonus and sometimes have their benefits reduced to save the State money.

-- MORE BONUSES FOR WELFARE BUREAUCRATS: The Cardin and Mink bills give States \$150 million for what is called "poverty reduction bonuses". Again, no bonuses for the people, just the bosses. There is no requirement for States to VERIFY their reduced poverty numbers before money is generously poured into the pockets of the State Welfare bureaucrats.

-- MARRIAGE INCENTIVE - MORE MONEY FOR WELFARE BUREAUCRATS: The House Bills, the Bush Proposal and S2052 gives states \$100 million annually to establish research programs to promote the formation of two-parent families. How about giving the people a Marriage Bonus for getting married and then a bonus every year they stay together? Money in the pockets of poor people is an appalling thought to the proponents of Welfare Deform.

-- LIMITED ACCOUNTABILITY: Only one bill, HR 3625, takes a crack at the widespread fleecing of the TANF money by prohibiting States from using TANF funds to replace state and local spending that does not meet MOE requirements, but there are no penalties to enforce this rule-- no jail time, no sanctions, nothing.

-- CHILD CARE: The Bush plan and the House Bills would freeze the child care block funding, while the other bills would increase child care funding.

-- TIME LIMITS: Time limits stay the same except for HR3113 by Congresswoman Mink of Hawaii. This bill would prohibit time limits below 5 years and exclude the months that the family works from the time limits.

-- ALL BILL LEAVE CHILDREN BEHIND - Time limits imposed on children continue undeterred without shame by the same people who rant and rave about "leaving no child behind".

-- Senators jockey for TANF position: Senators Breaux of Louisiana, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, Baucus of Montana and some other Republican and Democratic

Senators on the Senate Finance Committee will be coming out with a bill that would require 70% of the caseload to participate in TANF. The hours of participation would be 30 hours a week for parents with children over 6, of which 20-24 hours has to be paid or unpaid labor and 20 hours a week for parents with children under 6 years old. More details of this proposal will be on their website at <http://www.senate.gov/~breaux/>

-- CWD VICTIM OF THE WEEK

Ms. X from Los Angeles County was asked to come to Orientation on January 17, 2002. She did. She has three small children. She was told by the welfare department that they would pay for child care. She found a child care provider who watched her kids while she went to GAIN orientation from 7:30 to 3:30p.m. She submitted the child care forms given to her by the county to get the child care paid.

The county refused to pay the child care. She was then asked to come to Job Club on 4/17/02. After not being paid the last time, the child care provider refused to watch her kids again.

Because she did not have child care and would have been forced to leave her children alone for several weeks in order to attend Job Club, she did not go to the Job Club appointment. She called her GAIN worker several times and left messages but never got a call back. Subsequently, the county has started the sanction process.

We had hoped that this was the only problem this family had, but, she does live in Los Angeles County, so there were more problems. She has three kids and only gets \$560 a month, when she should be getting \$819 a month. She has been on aid since 11/01. Why is the county stealing \$259 a month from her? We have contacted the District Director to ask that they stop stealing money from this family. We wonder how many other families are similarly situated in Los Angeles County.

CCWRO SERVICES AVAILABLE TO LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAMS & WELFARE RECIPIENTS REFERRED TO US BY LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAMS

Types of Services Offered:

Litigation, Fair Hearing Representation, Fair Hearing Consultation, Informational Services, Research Services, In depth Consultation.

Programs Covered

CalWORKs, Welfare to Work (WtW), Food Stamps, Medi-Cal. General Assistance and Refugee Immigration Problems

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