

# CCWRO Weekly New Welfare News

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## TANF Update - How much Goes to the Poor?

In 1996, the Republican Congress passed and then President Clinton signed the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF). This program was sold as a way to self-sufficiency for welfare families; however, it was actually an historic attack on poor families and children. How was it supposed to help the poor? Benefits were limited to a five (5) year time limit. It also provided for full family termination of benefits for allegedly not obeying welfare bureaucrats. Women who had just given birth had to enroll their infants in day care centers and forced to join millions of others also looking for the same non-existent jobs that migrated to China. Newborns need their mothers and breast-feeding is good for babies, but according to the President Clinton and the Republicans, poor babies did not deserve this nurturing care because their mothers were forced into the job market too early.

Of course having more people looking for work does benefit a certain segment of our society – the corporations, like WallMart, etc. More people in the job pool means more people available for lower paying jobs.

Mr. Clinton and those who voted for TANF five (5) year limit were hypocrites in that they never voted to limit

their own public assistance to a five-year limit. Mr. Clinton still gets his thousands of dollars in public assistance as a former President, notwithstanding the fact that he is a millionaire. The same is true for all of the Senators and Congresspersons who voted for this TANF bill – they are all getting their public assistance in the form of pensions, congressional retirement, etc.

States were very excited about having the TANF block grants. They alleged it would give them the flexibility to help poor people.

We decided to visit the TANF program ten years later to see how are States helping the poor. In **1996, 84%** of the welfare funds were used for payment to families. **Ten years later only a meager 29% of the TANF money is used for basic assistance/payments to families.**

Where does the money go? The remainder is used for the welfare bureaucracy and to subsidize the general fund of the various states. In California, in the last 10 years TANF has contributed over \$10 billion to the General Fund. No wonder States love TANF and the poor hate it.

States have harvested billions from the TANF program given the fact that California is the second highest in the country of percentage of the TANF money being used for payments to families.

Below is a state-by-state list of percentage of TANF funds used for basic assistance, which is payments to families.

|    |             |         |    |              |        |    |               |               |
|----|-------------|---------|----|--------------|--------|----|---------------|---------------|
| 1  | ARKANSAS    | 8.11% * | 18 | S. CAROLINA  | 20.51% | 35 | MISSOURI      | 29.39%        |
| 2  | OKLAHOMA    | 8.75%   | 19 | WISCONSIN    | 20.63% | 36 | IOWA          | 30.74%        |
| 3  | NEW JERSEY  | 9.08%   | 20 | LOUISIANA    | 20.70% | 37 | PENNSYLVANIA  | 31.10%        |
| 4  | ILLINOIS    | 10.66%  | 21 | MINNESOTA    | 21.16% | 38 | KENTUCKY      | 31.44%        |
| 5  | GEORGIA     | 12.11%  | 22 | TENNESSEE    | 22.42% | 39 | NEW YORK      | 31.59%        |
| 6  | IDAHO       | 12.46%  | 23 | W. VIRGINIA  | 22.47% | 40 | NEVADA        | 32.98%        |
| 7  | TEXAS       | 13.42%  | 24 | UTAH         | 22.79% | 41 | MASSACHUSETTS | 33.88%        |
| 8  | WYOMING     | 13.49%  | 25 | S. DAKOTA    | 22.84% | 42 | KANSAS        | 33.92%        |
| 9  | FLORIDA     | 14.77%  | 26 | CONNECTICUT  | 24.39% | 43 | RHODE ISLAND  | 35.78%        |
| 10 | OHIO        | 15.43%  | 27 | HAWAII       | 24.86% | 44 | ARIZONA       | 37.12%        |
| 11 | MISSISSIPPI | 15.48%  | 28 | DIST.OF COL. | 25.08% | 45 | WASHINGTON    | 38.19%        |
| 12 | N. CAROLINA | 15.69%  | 29 | INDIANA      | 25.63% | 46 | VIRGINIA      | 39.47%        |
| 13 | ALABAMA     | 17.79%  | 30 | DELAWARE     | 26.90% | 47 | NEW MEXICO    | 40.31%        |
| 14 | MONTANA     | 18.34%  | 31 | NEW HAMP.    | 26.94% | 48 | VERMONT       | 42.47%        |
| 15 | MARYLAND    | 18.56%  | 32 | ALASKA       | 27.00% | 49 | CALIFORNIA    | 45.60%        |
| 16 | COLORADO    | 18.66%  | 33 | OREGON       | 27.20% | 50 | MAINE         | 48.80%        |
| 17 | N. DAKOTA   | 19.41%  | 34 | MICHIGAN     | 29.21% |    |               |               |
|    |             |         |    |              |        |    | <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>28.99%</b> |

\* Percentage of total TANF funds used for Basic Assistance/Payments to Families.

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