

CCWRO Weekly New Welfare News

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2008 Federal Public Benefits Congressional Legislative Update

TANF legislation cooking – TANF supporters are pushing legislation that would include a package of fixes to several problems faced by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. These issues include eliminating the 90 percent two-parent work rate; removal of substance abuse and mental health from the job readiness category; one to two years of penalty relief for states that have not met the work participation rates; and increasing flexibility in maintenance-of-effort spending. The increasing flexibility in maintenance-of-effort means that states can spend money on non-TANF clients and have it count as helping the poor.

Nobody in Washington is working for the poor by advocating that at least 75% of the total TANF dollars and the state match go towards payments to families. That would not please States and County Welfare Bureaucrats.

Medicaid moves to increase states share of cost – States are cutting back on Medicaid all over the country. In order to provide some relief to States in the Medicaid area, Congress is considering increasing the federal matching rates in the proposed September 2008 budget stimulus package. Proponent of increasing the federal match have met with House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) and Rep. Artur Davis (D-Ala.).

Child support bill to spend less money to collect child support – States are proposing to reduce the amount of money that they invest in the child support system. Under current law the federal government puts up 66 of the costs of the state must put up 34%. States used to be able to reduce the amount of money that they put up by using some performance gimmicks. Section 7309 of the

Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-171, 120 Stat. 147) repealed the gimmicks in S.803. This bill does nothing for poor families who see minimum benefit from the child support collected by the states.

Santa Clara County Does Not Want Customer to Get Legal Help

Effective 6-19-08 Santa Clara County revised their “third party case review” policy. Under this revised policy, if a customer wants her or his file looked at by a lawyer or a representative, the customer must contact her or his welfare worker, which can take days or weeks, make an appointment and get a county release form known as SC 145. Then the customer must take this form to the lawyer or representative, have it completed, and make another appointment with the same worker to hand this document to the worker. The policy does not provide for mailing the SC 145. Once the worker gets the form, then the lawyer or representative has to call the same worker and try to make an appointment with the welfare worker to look at the case.

The idea is to make it as hard and complicated as possible and discourage customers from exercising their constitutional rights to representation.

STATISTIC OF THE MONTH

During June 2008, there were 126,386 unduplicated participants in the California Welfare-to-Work programs. This means 56,096 participants were not provided with transportation notwithstanding the enormous increase of energy costs. Assuming the average cost of transportation is \$100, each month welfare parents are being cheated out of \$5.6 million and annual of \$67.2 million money defrauded from welfare families by California counties. We wonder if there is a county welfare director who can say that 44% of their staff do not claim travel reimbursement. They cannot unless they are lying.