

Capitol Report

'Workfare' Initiative Bid Begun

By Thorne Gray
Bee Capitol Bureau

Three Republicans and a citizens group Wednesday announced plans for an initiative for a constitutional amendment to make welfare into "workfare" and cut children's welfare program benefits 20 percent.

Assemblymen Patrick Nolan of Glendale and Ernest Konnyu of Saratoga and Sen. Ed Royce of Anaheim called the proposal the Welfare Reform Act of 1984. They hope to qualify it for the November ballot.

They said as a constitutional amendment, the proposal would be "Rose Bird proof," meaning state Chief Justice Rose Bird couldn't change it on constitutional grounds.

They were joined by Raymond Waters and Stan Nielsen, president and treasurer of Citizens' Alliance, a non-profit Sacramento political group.

Nolan predicted citizens would readily contribute to get the proposal on the November ballot and then vote for it.

"Virtually everyone is tired of looking at their paycheck and seeing what the government takes out for welfare," Nolan said.

Nolan and his colleagues said their proposal would save the state about \$400 million a year in welfare



Associated Press

GOP Assemblymen Ernest Konnyu of Saratoga and Patrick Nolan of Glendale unveiled an initiative to reform welfare.

costs starting July 1, 1985.

There would be a similar federal savings as welfare recipients found jobs, dropped off the rolls or stopped moving to California because welfare benefits are so high, they said.

The state cost reductions would translate into a savings of about 13 cents a week for the average California household, a consultant to the Assembly Human Services Committee calculated later.

Under the proposal, mothers on welfare would have to spend 40 hours a week either at government-provided jobs or looking for work to qualify for their checks. If they had

disabled children or children under six at home, they would be excused.

The program would be patterned after a San Diego County experiment that Konnyu said found jobs for 42 out of every 100 welfare mothers.

The San Diego experiment has been praised in some quarters but was attacked this week by the Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations. In a "Report on the Victims of the San Diego County Workfare Program," the coalition said many needy people are suffering under the San Diego provisions.