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Loud cry for reform of the welfare system

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WASHINGTON — A loud cry was heard on Capitol Hill Friday for quick and comprehensive reform of the nation's welfare system, with California's new welfare program one of the possible solutions.

Lawmakers, government officials and welfare rights groups addressed a House subcommittee on domestic marketing, consumer relations, and nutrition as it began a long look at congressional welfare action.

Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan, D-N.Y., said reform is needed most for the nation's children.

"We are the first society in history in which the poorest group is the children," Moynihan said. "A third of the children in the U.S. will be on welfare before their 18th birthday."

Diana Pierce, representing the California Coalition for Welfare Rights Organizations, said the state's new program — GAIN (Greater Avenues Toward Independence) — has potential, but serious problems, too.