

Commission on the Economic Status of Women



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Minnesota Legislative Session 1999

This issue highlights and summarizes legislative changes of interest to the Commission. You may contact the Commission office for further information on legislative issues.

Contents

Economic Development	2
Family and Early Childhood Development	4
Health and Human Services	7
Higher Education	9
Judiciary Finance	10
K-12 Education	11
Midwifery	11
State Government	11

Announcements

- If you would be interested in proposing a hearing topic, or you would like us to hold a hearing in your community during the interim session, please notify the Commission.
- Recently added to our website are our 1994 Pay Equity report and the May newsletter on child support in the U.S., 1995.

Economic Development

Chapter 223

Appropriations

(Article 1)

Department of Trade and Economic Development

A \$1 million one-time appropriation from the workforce development fund for the Pathways program (an employment training program for public assistance recipients), and \$3 million from the TANF block grant over the biennium. Provides that the legislature intends general fund base funding for the Pathways program to be \$1.5 million per year in the 2002-2003 biennium.

Technical Assistance

\$440,000 over the biennium for microenterprise technical assistance. This is a one-time appropriation.

Women Venture

\$265,000 grant for each year of the biennium to Women Venture. Women Venture is directed to implement a program to encourage and assist women to enter nontraditional careers, including outreach, training, job placement, and retention services. The legislation states that this program should be "accessible to low-income working mothers, including MFIP participants."

Pathways Program

Listed under Article 2

Grants-in-aid will be available to assist people transitioning from welfare to work through the Pathways program. These grants can be given to educational and nonprofit training institutions for education and training programs to assist recipients in transition.

Department of Economic Security

Welfare-to-Work

\$500,000 in FY2000 for welfare-to-work extended employment services for public assistance recipients with severe impairment to employment, a one-time appropriation.

Job Training

\$775,000 each year for job training from the workforce development fund.

Matching Welfare-to-Work Funds

\$5,000,000 one-time appropriation to serve as matching dollars for the U.S. Department of Labor Welfare-to-Work funds.

Displaced Homemaker Program

\$2,049,000 for FY2000 and \$2,054,000 for FY 2001 the displaced homemaker programs. Of this appropriation, \$227,000 is a one-time appropriation from the workforce development fund. The commissioner is instructed to report back to the legislature on a plan for instituting a sliding fee scale in this program. Each year, \$100,000 of the funds shall be used as one-time grants to St. Paul District 5 Planning Council for a community work empowerment support group demonstration project. The support groups will serve individuals who are in the process of obtaining jobs, including those in welfare-to-work programs. Describes the purposes of the empowerment groups.

Economic Development, Cont'd

Chapter 223

Minnesota Housing Finance Agency

Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program

\$3,250,000 will be allotted the first year and \$3,250,000 the second year to the family homeless prevention and assistance program and will be available until June 30, 2001. \$1,875,000 the first year and the entire sum of the second year is from the state's federal TANF block grant, to reimburse the housing development fund for assistance given to families receiving TANF assistance under the MFIP program.

TANF Block Grant for the Housing Development Fund

\$2,125,000 will be appropriated each year from the TANF block grant to reimburse the housing development fund for rent subsidies provided to families receiving assistance from the MFIP program.

Department of Military Affairs

Camp Ripley

Appropriates \$100,000 to use the Camp Ripley facilities and staff for community empowerment support groups providing "soft

skills" job training for people making the transition from welfare to work and others. "Soft skills" include job skills such as punctuality and following directions.

Family and Early Childhood Development

Chapter 205

Children and Family Support

(Article 1)

Eligibility

Directs the Commissioner of Children Families and Learning to develop a universal application form for child care assistance which explains eligibility requirements and penalties for wrongfully obtaining child care assistance.

Waiting List

Requires the county to perform a preliminary determination of eligibility at the time a family requests child care assistance. Requires the family to provide the information. Waiting lists must be reviewed and updated every six months.

At Home Infant Care

Clarifies provisions of this program and allows a family on the program to retain their place on the waiting list when they return to the basic sliding fee program. Requires the commissioner to develop and distribute consumer information about the program.

Wrongfully Obtaining Assistance

Adds penalties for wrongfully obtaining child care assistance, for the receipt of payments to which an individual is not entitled as a provider of subsidized child care, or for a false claim for child care assistance. A family with a family member found to be guilty of wrongfully obtaining child care assistance will be disqualified from child care assistance programs.

Office of Drug Policy and Violence Prevention

This office and its programs are transferred to the Department of Public Safety.

School Age Child Care

Allows a community group, not for profit or for profit, to use available school facilities for a school age child care program if the school board does not offer one.

Requires that a school age child care program include access to available school facilities under rules which the school district may establish and which may require evidence of adequate insurance and a demonstration of the adequacy and training of staff.

Provider Bonus

Eliminates a 10% bonus which had been paid to child care providers who were accredited.

Child Care Improvement Grants

Allows child care improvement grants to be used to provide business planning assistance for child care providers.

Pretax Child Care Accounts, Assistance for Employers

The Commissioners of the Department of Children, Families and Learning and Revenue may provide technical assistance, workshops for employers or employees about pretax accounts and promotional materials or assistance to encourage employers to participate in establishing pretax child care accounts for employees.

Family and Early Childhood Development, Cont'd

Chapter 205

Parent Fees & Schedule

Reinstates the law that treats all families the same with respect to how the amount of the copayment is determined. Eliminates language that prohibited decreasing the amount of copayment if family size increased after the initial eligibility determination. In addition, the parent fee schedule is increased for families with income above 100% of the federal poverty guidelines.

Persons Seeking Employment

Clarifies that employed persons working 20 hours a week and full time students working at least 10 hours a week are eligible for child care assistance for employment. Also clarifies that work study programs are counted as employment.

Appropriations

Money is appropriated from the general fund for:

- Learning Readiness
- Early Childhood Family Education
- Health and Developmental screening
- Way to Grow
- Head Start, including money for full year programming with priority given to existing programs and additional money to expand full year programming for children 0 to 3.
- Basic Sliding Fee Child Care
- MFIP Child Care
- Child care development

Money is appropriated from federal TANF funds to:

- Basic Sliding Fee Child Care
- Transition Year Child Care
- Child care development, including funds for improvements to child care facilities, business planning and development of licensed child care, and for assistance to establish pretax child care accounts.

Prevention and Intervention

(Article 3)

After School Enrichment Programs

Establishes a competitive statewide after school enrichment grant program intended to increase the number of children participating in adult supervised programs in non school hours, support academic achievement, reduce juvenile

crime, increase school attendance, increase youth activity in community service, increase skills in technology, the arts, sports and other activities and increase the academic achievement of adolescent parents.

Family and Early Childhood Development, Cont'd

Chapter 205

Appropriations

Appropriations

Money is appropriated from the general fund for:

- Violence prevention education grants

- After school enrichment grants
- Family visitation centers
- Adolescent parenting grants
- Male responsibility and fathering grants.

Self-Sufficiency and Life Long Learning

Family Assets for Independence

Changes eligibility for the program to individuals at 185% of the federal poverty level with assets of \$15,000 or less. Changes the match required from state and nonstate funds from \$2.00 for every \$1.00 to \$1.50 for every \$1.00 of funds withdrawn from the account.

Appropriations

Appropriates money from the general fund for:

- Minnesota Economic Opportunity Grants
- Transitional housing
- Adult Basic Education
- Food shelf program
- Family Assets for Independence.

Resource and Referral Programs

(Article 5)

Child Care Resource and Referral

Provides for the distribution of funds for the operation of child care resource and referral

programs, sets out the factors for distribution of funds as well as the responsibilities of child care resource and referral programs.

Appropriations

(Article 1)

Funds Affecting Women

Appropriates money from the general fund for:

- Increasing by six the number of living at home block nurse programs (\$240,000)
- Increasing wages of workers in a variety of home and community based health care services
- Increased funding for employment and training efforts

Appropriates TANF funds as follows:

- \$260,000 each year for Parents Fair Share to assist unemployed noncustodial parents with job search and parenting skills

- \$140,000 each year for the New Chance program to provide comprehensive services to young parents in Hennepin County who have dropped out of school and are receiving public assistance
- \$12,960,000 to increase employment and training services grants for MFIP; of this amount \$750,000 goes to the Job Skills Partnership board for a health care and human services worker training and retention program
- \$1,000,000 for creating and expanding adult supervised supportive living for adolescent parents with priority for MFIP participants

Assistance Programs

(Article 6)

MFIP Exit Level

Requires the commissioner to adjust the exit level in state fiscal years 2000 and 2001 to ensure that participants do not lose eligibility for MFIP until their income reaches 120 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. In state fiscal years 2002 and thereafter the earned income disregard percentage will remain at the level reached in October 2000.

Right to Discontinue Cash Assistance

Allows an MFIP participant who is not in vendor payment status to discontinue receipt of cash assistance and to retain months of eligibility for child care assistance and for medical assistance, provided they have not exceeded the 60 month time limit.

Recommendations to 60-Month Limit

Requires the commissioner to make recommendations regarding MFIP families that reach the 60 month time limit and are still receiving MFIP cash assistance.

Job Search; Job Search Support Plan

Allows a job search support plan to specify that a participant attend adult basic education or English as a second language as part of the required hours of job search.

Allows the job counselor to require a professional chemical use assessment if there is a reasonable belief that a participant's ability to obtain or retain suitable employment is impaired by a medical condition.

Requires a job training provider to make available information on business and higher education partnerships in the Minnesota job skills partnership, community and technical colleges adult basic education and vocational rehabilitation program services.

Child Support

(Article 7)

Judgement; Order

Allows a court in a parentage action to order a party to pay reasonable expenses of a woman's pregnancy including her lost wages due to medical necessity.

License Suspension

Allows the court to suspend or bar receipt of a recreational license when an obligor is 6 months in arrears in a child support or maintenance payment, is not in compliance with a written payment agreement or has failed to comply with a subpoena in a paternity or child support proceeding.

Recreation license includes all licenses, permits and stamps issued centrally by the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources. If the obligor provides proof of compliance to the court the license or licenses will no longer be suspended.

Child Support Judgment by Operation of Law

A court may order interest on a child support debt to stop accruing if the court finds the obligor is unable to pay support because of a significant physical or mental disability or is a recipient of SSI, OASDI, other disability benefits or public assistance based on need.

Child Support Arrearage Forgiveness Report

Requires the commissioner to study the feasibility of forgiving child support arrears in a fair and consistent manner and to develop a child support arrearage forgiveness policy. Also requires the commissioner to explore the possibility of direct payment of child support to the custodial parent and to report to the legislature by December 1, 1999.

Child Protection

(Article 8)

Definitions

Adds a definition which provides that there is "medical neglect" when the parent or other person responsible for the child: (1) engages in violent behavior that could result in serious physical, mental or injury to the child; (2) engages in repeated domestic assault that would constitute a violation of

the criminal domestic assault statute; (3) intentionally inflicts or attempts to inflict bodily harm against a family or household member within sight or sound of the child; or (4) subjects the child to ongoing domestic violence by the abuser in the home environment that is likely to have a detrimental effect on the well-being of the child.

Health and Human Services, Cont'd

Chapter 245

Other Provisions

(Article 10)

Program Established

Establishes a health care worker training and retention program to alleviate worker shortages in health care and human services industries and to

increase opportunities for direct care employees to qualify for advanced employment in the health care or human services fields through experience, training and education.

Higher Education

Chapter 214

Child Care

(Article 1)

Study of Child Care Allocations

Requires the Higher Education Services Office (HESO) to collect information from higher

education institutions on the use of child care and work study allocations.

Child Care Study

(Article 2)

Child Care Study of Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Participants

Requires the Commissioners of Human Services and Children, Families and Learning to: (1) review child care program requirements for Minnesota Family Investment Program Participants attending school part time without child care eligibility; (2) implement any needed adjustments to program requirements; and (3) report on adjustments implemented and make recommendations for needed changes in the law to better service participants.

Child Care Grant Increase Allowance for Infants

Allows for an increase of up to ten percent of the maximum child care grant (\$2,000) for infant care to compensate for the higher costs of caring for infants.



Appropriations

(Article 1)

Funds Affecting Women

Appropriates funds from the general fund for:

- Civil legal services for low income families, farm families and low income clients in family law matters
- Community crime prevention grants to organizations that focus on intervention and prevention of teenage prostitution
- Center for Crime Victims Services
- Administration of battered women's shelter per diem payments
- A battered women's shelter in Bloomington and an American Indian battered women's shelter in Duluth
- Family Violence Coordinating Council in the 4th Judicial District for a domestic fatality review team (\$143,000)
- Residential program for women leaving prostitution (\$600,000)
- Programming for adult female offenders (\$50,000)

Crime Prevention and Law Enforcement Grants

(Article 2)

Domestic Fatality Review Team Pilot Project

Establishes a pilot project to review domestic violence deaths that have occurred in the 4th Judicial District in order to develop recommendations for policies and protocols for community prevention and intervention initiatives to reduce and eliminate the incidence of domestic violence and resulting fatalities.

Office of Drug Policy and Violence Prevention

Transfers the office of drug policy and violence prevention from the Department of Children, Families and Learning to the Department of Public Safety.

K-12 Education



Chapter 241

Health Care Coverage

(Article 3)

Health and Child Care Coverage for Youthworks Program Participants

Allows for health and child care coverage of dependents of Youthworks program participants if other coverage is not available.

Vetoed

- Appropriated \$300,000 for adolescent parenting grants. (Funding provided in the Family and Early Childhood bill.)

Midwifery



Chapter 162

Midwifery

Defines the scope and practice of traditional midwifery. Defines traditional midwifery as the assessment and care of a woman and newborn during pregnancy, labor, birth and the postpartum period outside a hospital. Defines practice standards. Establishes licensure requirements,

defines responsibilities of the board on medical practices and continuing education requirements. Establishes an advisory council on licensed traditional midwifery to advise the board regarding standards and enforcement of the law and other issues related to complaints and disciplinary actions.

State Government



Chapter 242

Commission on the Economic Status of Women

Appropriation

Appropriates \$230,000 each year of the biennium for the commission.

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