

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 1909
By: Maxey (Truan)
Health & Human Services
5-18-97
Committee Report (Amended)

DIGEST

The 74th Legislature created a pilot program implementing fill-the-gap budgeting for certain families. Fill-the-gap budgeting is a system of budgeting in which benefits are gradually lowered using a percentage of the difference between the standard of need and the countable income to calculate the grand benefit. Through the use of fill-the-gap budgeting, the individual is no longer penalized for finding employment by being immediately cut off from public assistance programs. This bill will provide regulations regarding methods used to extend the period of supported employment for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

PURPOSE

As proposed, H.B. 1909 provide regulations regarding methods used to extend the period of supported employment for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 31B, Human Resources Code, by adding Section 31.043, as follows:

Sec. 31.043. **FILL-THE-GAP BUDGETING.** Authorizes the Texas Department of Human Services (department) to use a form of fill-the-gap budgeting or another method under which the department disregards earnings of family members who obtain employment while receiving the assistance to extend the period of supported employment for families who receive financial assistance under this chapter. Defines "fill-the-gap budgeting."

SECTION 2. Amends Sections 7.06(c) and (e), Chapter 655, Acts of the 74th Legislature, Regular Session, 1995, to require the department to notify members of the 76th and 77th, rather than 75th and 76th, legislatures of the filing of the report. Provides that this section expires September 1, 2001, rather 1999.

SECTION 3. Requires the department to revise the pilot program established by Section 7.06, Chapter 655, Acts of the 74th Legislature, Regular Session, 1995, as necessary to implement statewide the "fill-the-gap budgeting" program prescribed by Section 31.043, Human Resources Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 1997.

SECTION 5. Emergency clause.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE CHANGES

Amendment 1.

(1) On page 1, lines 10 and 11, strike "subject to the availability of funds, shall" and substitute "may".

(2) On page 1, lines 14 and 15, insert the following and redesignate the subsequent subsections:

(b) The department may limit the percentage of earnings disregarded, impose a time limit on how long the earnings are disregarded or gradually reduce the percentage of earnings disregarded in order to remain within available funding.

(c) Funding for earnings disregards may also come from savings associated with sanctions related to noncompliance with the personal responsibility agreement and work requirements in this chapter, from savings resulting from caseload declines below projections specified in the Appropriations bill, and from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant funds.