

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.C.R. 138
By: Wohlgemuth (Harris)
Finance
5/10/2001
Engrossed

DIGEST

Through the Medicaid program the federal government matches state funding to provide certain low-income elderly, disabled, and children with health care coverage. To access federal funds, the State of Texas is obligated to provide certain health care benefits to individuals eligible for Medicaid without regard to costs or the actual needs of individuals. The Medicaid program now represents almost one-quarter of Texas' biennial budget in all funds, having increased four-fold during the last 10 years due to population growth, medical inflation, and expanded eligibility. During the same 10-year period, the rate of individuals without health insurance in Texas has remained substantially unchanged and Medicaid offers little flexibility for Texas to develop innovative methods of providing health care to individuals with low incomes or with acute health care needs as it requires permission from the federal government to make changes in the program. The recent experience of welfare reform at the federal level has provided Texas with the opportunity to use federal funds in a flexible manner while providing necessary services to many and Texas has been able to move significant numbers of individuals from welfare to work by virtue of the flexibility afforded by congress. As recently as 1996, congress proposed returning Medicaid funds to the state as a block grant and providing Medicaid funds to Texas as a block grant, with consideration for population growth and demographics, would offer the flexibility needed to meet the unique needs of the state and provide better access to quality health care.

PURPOSE

H.C.R. 138 submits the following proposals:

That the 77th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to provide Medicaid funds to Texas in the form of a block grant; and, be it further resolved, that the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.