

STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

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Source

Legislative
Resolve No.

CSHJR 59 (HESS)

31



Urging the United States Congress to pass an amended form of H.R. 1279 (99th Congress), the AFDC Error Reduction and Quality Control Act, or substantially similar legislation.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program is an integral part of the social programs of the United States and critical to the health and welfare of the children who live in poverty in the United States; and

WHEREAS Alaska supports a system of quality control of the AFDC program if the system is equitable and cost-effective, review is timely, fiscal sanctions are reasonable, and incentives are included; and

WHEREAS the quality control programs instituted by the states and territories of the United States and monitored by the federal government have reduced the national rate of error on the payment of AFDC benefits by one-half during the last decade; and

WHEREAS experience with the quality control program for AFDC shows that many errors are based on errors in paperwork or on client errors that the states and territories cannot control and that are not necessarily related to misspent funds; and

WHEREAS the states and territories of the United States are facing 1.3 billion dollars in fiscal sanctions for exceeding federally determined error tolerance levels; and

WHEREAS the states and territories of the United States are faced with the necessity of either reducing the administration of their social programs and thereby risking higher rates of error, or reducing benefits to clients to compensate for the fiscal sanctions imposed by the federal government; and

WHEREAS all programs for low income people, including the

food stamp and Medicaid programs, are inextricably linked to each other, and reductions or changes in one program affect the benefits available in other programs; and

WHEREAS all federal programs for low income persons have separate quality control and fiscal sanction components, thereby amassing billions of dollars in potential fiscal sanctions for the states and territories of the United States;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska State Legislature that the United States Congress is respectfully urged to support the passage of legislation that incorporates the substance of the AFDC Error Reduction and Quality Control Act (H.R. 1279, 99th Congress), amended to cover the Food Stamp and Medicaid Programs as well as the AFDC program; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that this legislation should require that

(1) the United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) shall disregard errors that have no fiscal impact when determining error rates;

(2) there shall be established a national error rate that is four percent for the AFDC and Medicaid programs and five percent for the food stamp program, and that allows a higher error rate on a state-by-state or territory-by-territory basis under appropriate conditions;

(3) DHHS shall provide positive financial incentives to states and territories with error rates less than the national error rate in the form of enhanced federal funding for the administrative costs of the AFDC, Medicaid and food stamp programs; and

(4) DHHS shall waive all or part of the fiscal sanctions if the secretary of the DHHS determines that a noncomplying state or territory has made a good faith effort to comply but has experienced circumstances beyond its control that make it impossible for the state or territory to comply.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Ronald Reagan, President of the United States; the Honorable Dr. Otis Bowen, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; the Honorable George Bush, Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; to the Honorable Lowell P. Weicker, Jr., Chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations; to the Honorable Fortney H. Stark, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means; to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; and to the primary committee that deals with matters of health in each legislative house of each state of the United States other than Alaska.