

Senate Fiscal Agency
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SFA

BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 945 (as reported by the Committee of the Whole)

Sponsor: Senator Robert Geake

Committee: Families, Mental Health and Human Services

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Social Welfare Act to require the Family Independence Agency (FIA) to develop and implement a learnfare demonstration project in three counties by December 31, 1998. Under the project, a recipient's assistance would be reduced if a child aged six to 11 were not enrolled in school or were habitually truant (for the second or subsequent time). The recipient could request a hearing at which he or she would have the opportunity to establish good cause for the child's absence from school. The FIA would have to request a Federal waiver to permit the application of the bill to assistance recipients. Before implementing the demonstration projects the FIA would have to adopt guidelines for good cause exceptions to the bill's provisions, and guidelines setting forth case management services to be provided.

If a child aged six to 11 were a dependent child of a family independence assistance recipient, the child and the recipient would be subject to the measures described in the bill if either of the following applied:

- The child was not enrolled in the public schools during the current school semester, or was not enrolled in the public schools during the immediately preceding school semester, in violation of Part 24 of the Revised School Code.
- The child was "habitually truant" (as defined in the bill) during the current school semester or was habitually truant during the immediately preceding school semester.

The first time that the child met these conditions, the county department would have to monitor the child's school attendance on a monthly basis, and offer the child and the recipient case management services designed to improve school attendance. If a child met the conditions for a second or subsequent time, for the next month (and each month thereafter in which the child had more than two unexcused absences) the adult recipient responsible for the child would not be included in the eligible group in determining the recipient's assistance.

Proposed MCL 400.57j

Legislative Analyst: G. Towne

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on State government. The unspecified financial penalties would result in savings to be credited to the Department budget. However, program administration costs, such as reporting and matching activities, and case management would offset a potential reduction in grant expenditures. According to the Department, administration would be costly because school attendance requirements, or what constitutes truancy, are not uniform throughout the State. In addition, to the extent that program recipients dropped out or returned to school, changes in school aid payments would occur.

Date Completed: 3-17-98

Fiscal Analyst: C. Cole