

Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

SFA



BILL ANALYSIS

Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986
TDD: (517) 373-0543

Senate Bill 878 (Substitute S-1 as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Alan Sanborn
Committee: Families, Mental Health and Human Services

Date Completed: 5-1-02

RATIONALE

Both public and private agencies provide services in many communities to pregnant women and parents who may need assistance with their situations. Services such as counseling, health care including prenatal care and delivery for pregnant women, day care for children, and other types of social services might be available but not necessarily from the same resource. The difficulty of locating services may be compounded for college students, especially if they are unfamiliar with the community. While some colleges and universities provide centralized resources for students who are parents or pregnant, or at least disseminate information about different resources available in the on-campus and off-campus communities, others do not have the financial capability of providing those services or referrals to their students. In order to help pregnant and parenting students achieve their academic goals, some people believe that the State should assist colleges and universities in providing coordinated information regarding available resources.

CONTENT

The bill would create the "Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Act" to do all of the following:

- **Establish the "Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Fund".**
- **Allow the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) to award grants from the Fund to institutions of higher education that established and operated a "Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Office".**
- **Specify requirements that an Office would have to meet.**
- **Allow an Office to provide referrals on**

prenatal care, delivery, infant or foster care, or adoption, and on family planning to students who requested that information, but not for abortion services.

- **Require the MDCH to identify specific performance criteria and standards that an Office would have to use in preparing its annual report.**
- **Allow the MDCH to promulgate rules to implement and administer the bill.**

Fund

The "Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Fund" would be established in the Department of Treasury. The Fund would consist of appropriations; money allocated, donated, or paid to the Fund from any source; and interest and earnings from Fund investments. The State Treasurer would have to direct the investment of the Fund.

Money in the Fund at the close of a fiscal year would remain in the Fund and could not revert to the General Fund. Money in the Fund could be appropriated for grants under the bill and the administrative costs of the MDCH in implementing and administering the bill. The State Treasurer would have to make a grant from the Fund to an institution of higher education upon receiving a written notice from the MDCH.

Grants

An institution of higher education that had established and operated or agreed to establish and operate a Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Office that met the requirements of the bill would be eligible for and could receive a grant. ("Institution of

higher education” would mean a degree- or certificate-granting public or private college or university, junior college, or community college in Michigan.) The MDCH could establish the form or format of a grant application and could require that an institution of higher education provide additional information after the Department had reviewed its grant application.

The MDCH could award a grant to one or more eligible institutions of higher education, but could not award more than four grants, for pilot programs, during the first year after the bill’s effective date. The MDCH would have to determine which, and how many, eligible institutions would receive a grant to establish and operate an Office.

If the MDCH awarded a grant under the bill, it would have to give the State Treasurer a written notice that contained both the name of the institution of higher education receiving the grant and the amount of the grant, and that requested payment of the grant amount from the Fund.

Office

An institution of higher education could establish and operate a Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Office. An Office would have to be located on the institution’s campus and annually would have to assess the performance of the institution and the Office in meeting the following needs of students on campus who were pregnant or who were custodial parents or legal guardians of a minor:

- Comprehensive student health care.
- Family housing.
- Child care.
- Flexible or alternative academic scheduling.
- Education concerning responsible parenting for mothers and fathers.

An Office also would have to identify public and private service providers that were qualified to meet the needs described above, both on campus and within the local community, and establish programs with qualified providers it selected to meet those needs. An Office also would have to assist students in locating and obtaining services that met one or more of those needs. If appropriate, an Office would have to provide

referrals for prenatal care, delivery, infant care, foster care, or adoption. If a student requested information, referrals for family planning also would have to be provided. An Office could not provide referrals for abortion services.

By the date determined by the MDCH, an Office would have to provide the Department with an annual report that itemized the Office’s expenditures during the preceding fiscal year and contained a review and evaluation of the Office’s performance in fulfilling its obligations. The MDCH would have to identify specific performance criteria and standards that an Office would have to use in preparing the annual report. The Department could establish the form or format of the report and could require that an Office provide additional information after the MDCH reviewed the report.

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

Knowing where and how to secure services may be a daunting task for any parent or pregnant woman in need of them, but that difficulty can be compounded if the person is a college student. For example, a pregnant or parenting student may be far from home and unfamiliar with the off-campus community, and might have unique issues to deal with in the areas of housing, transportation, child care, and academics. Even where a range of services is available to those students, information about services such as parent training, child care, family housing, and prenatal or pediatric care, may be difficult to gather because it is distributed by different offices. If students cannot obtain needed assistance because they do not know about it or even how to find out about it, the students might be more likely to drop out of school than if the information were readily available.

By providing for a system to fund Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Offices at institutions of higher education, the bill could create an incentive for schools to concentrate in one location information about services available to their students. More efficient delivery of that information, in turn, would

help pregnant and parenting students meet their particular needs and could bolster their likelihood of academic and career success.

Response: Although the bill would establish the Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Fund and allow the MDCH to award grants from it, the bill would not provide a revenue source for that Fund. The FY 2001-02 budget does not include an appropriation for this purpose, nor has an appropriation been recommended for FY 2002-03. Without the funding for grants to institutions of higher education, the bill would do little to achieve the goal of providing coordinated information to students.

Supporting Argument

An institution of higher education's Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Office, as proposed by the bill, would be a comprehensive program to aid student-parents. An Office would have to serve both mothers and fathers, provide information about services available from the institution and in the local community, and provide referrals for such essential needs as prenatal care, delivery of babies, infant care, foster care, and adoption. Disseminating information on the availability of those services and ensuring that a student-parent had access to the services, through referral by the Office, would benefit not only the students and their children but also the campus and local communities.

Opposing Argument

The bill would ban referrals for abortion services. A one-stop program under which students could learn about pregnancy and parenting services, however, should make available information about all legal options, which include abortion. As proposed by the bill, an Office would not advocate any particular action, but simply would be an information clearinghouse. Indeed, recipients of Federal family planning money are required to provide information and counseling regarding pregnancy termination along with information on prenatal care, adoption, and other issues. The bill's restriction could prevent those Federal funds from ever being used to fund the pregnant and parenting student services program it proposes.

Response: The bill would address students' difficulty in finding programs and support available to them. Information about clinics that perform abortions is readily

available from other sources, such as the Yellow Pages.

Legislative Analyst: Patrick Affholter

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on the State depending on the level of Fund activity and the number of postsecondary education institutions that might apply for a grant. There could be a fiscal impact on local units of government because public community colleges would be eligible to receive grants from the Fund. The bill would allow money from the Fund to cover costs of the Department of Community Health for the implementation and administration of the grant program. There is no FY 2001-02 appropriation for this Fund in the MDCH budget, nor has the Governor recommended one for FY 2002-03.

Fiscal Analyst: Ellen Jeffries
Dana Patterson

A0102\s878a

This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.