

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 6098

As Passed House
April 16, 1997

Title: An act relating to human services.

Brief Description: Relating to human services.

Sponsors: Senator West.

Brief History:

Floor Activity:

Passed House, 4/16/97, 97-0.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background: The federal welfare reform Act (P.L. 104-193) disqualifies legal immigrants from many forms of public assistance. Each state may decide whether or not to provide immigrants with benefits. Generally, public assistance for immigrants must be paid for with state, rather than federal funds.

Summary of Bill: Washington State exercises its option under the federal act to continue to make public assistance available to legal immigrants. Types of assistance include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Medicaid and social services block grant programs. For legal immigrants arriving after federal enactment (August 22, 1996), assistance is limited to families in which the parent or legal guardian resides in Washington for one year prior to application for assistance.

Legal immigrants losing Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are immediately eligible for General Assistance-Unemployable Program.

Federal sponsor deeming requirements apply to legal immigrants for a period of five years, but are waived if the sponsor dies or is permanently incapacitated during the deeming period.

The Department of Social and Health Services may establish a food assistance program for legal immigrants meeting the eligibility standards for federal food stamps.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.