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Senate Bill 831

Sponsor: Senator John F. Kelly

Committee: Education and Mental Health

Date Completed: 5-24-88

SUMMARY OF SENATE BILL 831 as introduced 4-28-88:

The bill would amend the Social Welfare Act to require the Department of Social Services (DSS) to create "state early education and development academies" that would be attended by "at-risk" children and recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children throughout the State. The bill would do the following:

- Require academies to be created in "high dependency areas" and make participation in an academy a condition of receiving public assistance for recipients in those areas and "long-term" recipients.
- Provide for the creation of academies in non-high risk areas, in conjunction with child care facilities or local school districts.
- Require the State Board of Education to set the curriculum of academies.
- Require academies to provide children with clothing, meals, and preschool preparation, and adults with job training, counseling, job search and parenting skills, and educational services.
- Provide that the ratio of children to an instructor could not exceed seven to one.
- Require the creation of a neighborhood early education and development corps to teach preschool children.

The DSS would be required "to develop a policy and program for the nurturing of at-risk children in a setting amenable to the preservation of the family unit as it exists, and for supplementing such nuclear institutions through the creation of neighborhood facilities designated as programs of excellence administered through state early education and development academies throughout the state".

In high dependency areas, an academy's location would have to be based on proximity or walking distance from the participants' homes. ("High dependency area" would mean a residential area in the State designated by the DSS.) The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) would have to retain the title and ownership of property and all other related capital outlay of facilities, which would be managed and operated by the local neighborhood board.

The core curriculum would have to be established by the State Board of Education task force (which would be created under Senate Bill 832), and modified by local and intermediate school boards as provided by law. Local neighborhood boards could comment on an academy's policies, programs, extracurricular activity planning, community use, including nonexclusive religions, ethics and value services, group therapy and counseling services, ethnic appreciation and folklore development, community crafts and cottage industry promotion, and any and all other activities. A neighborhood board would be composed of citizens whose children attended the facility and public members appointed by the Director of the academy.

In areas other than high dependency areas, academies would have to be established in conjunction with existing child care organizations or facilities and would have to be accessible to participants by public transportation or transportation provided by the DSS. Academies in rural areas would have to be established in conjunction with the school districts. The curriculum of both would have to be established by the State Board of Education.

Each academy would be under the direction of an academy director who met certification requirements set by the DSS. The director would have to nominate, and the Director of MSHDA would appoint, a three-person facilities board that would serve as the board of directors of a nonprofit housing cooperative corporation under the MSHDA Act. The academy director also would have to supervise programs and instructors.

An academy would be required to provide to children of the participants clothing, meals, and a curriculum of preschool preparation. Academies also would have to provide the parents with parenting skills, counseling, employment training, and job search skills, in addition to adult education or special education services available under the law. The parents would be required to assist in the supervised, cooperative care of the children. Required attendance at an academy would begin and end at the same time each day as a school in the school district, unless different times were established by the local neighborhood board. The DSS would have to prescribe standards for excusable absences for good cause, including illness.

In conjunction with the Department of Education, the DSS would be required to assist in creating a neighborhood early education and development corps, for the purpose of teaching preschool children participating in academies. Corps participants would have to encourage candidates with all of the following:

- A bachelor's degree in elementary education, physical education, art, or any other subject area considered appropriate by the DSS.
- A teaching certificate issued by the Board of Education, with an endorsement or certificate for early education, or a declaration of eligibility for that purpose.
- If possible, funded, and available, membership as a full-time volunteer under the Federal Domestic Volunteer Service Act.

The DSS would be required to identify throughout the State "high dependency catchment areas", which would be areas within municipalities in which the number of recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) exceeded 13% of the population of the census tract. The Department would have to establish standards for identifying and establishing the boundaries of high

S.B. 831 (5-24-88)

dependency areas, but would have to include within all such areas at least 50% of the AFDC recipients in the State.

A recipient who lived outside of a high dependency area, and his or her dependent children, would have to attend an academy as a condition of receiving public assistance if the recipient were determined by the DSS to be a long-term recipient who was unlikely to end his or her dependency on public assistance within a period equal to the average period of dependency of recipients who resided outside of high dependency areas and did not meet the profile standards for chronic public dependence. The DSS would have to set standards for determining chronic public dependence and which recipients would have to attend an academy under this provision. The standards would have to be based on a set of longitudinal and empirical factors, and could include the following:

- A history of dependence on public assistance within the recipient's immediate family.
- Low employment skills and the tendency to lack comprehension of the necessary elements to remedy those skills.
- Illiteracy or marginal literacy and undeveloped socialization skills.

Other than recipients in high dependency areas and long-term dependency recipients, AFDC recipients could attend an academy voluntarily.

The assistance grant of a participant would have to be paid with cosignatories of the grantee and to the academy that the participant was expected to attend, to be used for the purposes described in the bill, pursuant to Federal law governing two-party checks. A participant's shelter allowance, however, could be paid directly to the landlord or financial institution to which it was owed by the participant, in the manner provided in the Social Welfare Act for vendor payments.

The DSS could promulgate rules to implement the bill.

Note: Although Senate Bill 831 is not tie-barred to any other bill, Senate Bills 832-838 are tie-barred to Senate Bill 831 and would do the following:

- Senate Bill 832 would require school boards to provide adult education classes to all participants in the early education and development academy program, and require the Department of Education to create a neighborhood early education and development division.
- Senate Bill 833 would allocate \$20 million of the School Aid Fund for 1988-89 to develop compensatory education programs for educationally disadvantaged children under age five, require school districts to provide instruction in parenting for parents of those children, and provide for a four-year phase-in of the academy program.
- Senate Bill 834 would require the Department of Public Health to create mobile health and instructional clinics to serve the parents and children attending the academies.
- Senate Bill 835 would require the State Housing Development Authority to encourage or participate in programs to rehabilitate and convert property into early education and development academies.
- Senate Bill 836 would require the Department of Social Services to employ youth corps participants to maintain the academies.
- Senate Bill 837 would require the forgiveness of part of a higher education loan made to a participant in the neighborhood early education and development corps.
- Senate Bill 838 would require lenders of educational loans to inform borrowers about forgiveness options.

MCL 400.39 et al.

Legislative Analyst: S. Margules

FISCAL IMPACT

While the bill is the root of this eight-bill package in that it defines, in very general terms, who would receive services, where the services would be provided, what the services would have to be, and how the services would be provided, the potential costs to the Department of Social Services for the direct provision of services would appear to be limited. This is due to the interpretation that the major components, e.g., the purchase and repair of the actual physical plants, and the major educational aspects of this package, would be borne by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority and the Department of Education, respectively. Other cost related to parent counseling, food, clothing, and employment and training that could fall under the purview of the Department of Social Services could very well be handled with resources from existing programs within the Department of Social Services.

However, the Department of Social Services could sustain substantial administrative cost in identifying the target population as called for in Section 56K. This is due to the fact that all "census track" data are based on data obtained from the 1980 Census. Because of substantial socio-economic and demographic changes during the last eight years, it could be reasonably assumed that these data have little validity in determining high dependency areas within the State. As such, almost a complete statewide census would have to be redone in order to define accurately the high dependency areas. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the estimated cost of the census is \$10 per person, or in other words, if such a project were attempted by the State, it could cost up to \$90,000,000. The implication is that an accurate count of these areas may have to wait until the 1990 census is completed.

While there are methods available to estimate the potential number of recipients that could be classified as chronically dependent or that might be expected to be potential participants, a meaningful fiscal analysis will not be possible until the number and location of high dependency areas are established.

Fiscal Analyst: J. Walker

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.