

REVISE FAMILY INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM REQUIREMENT: PATERNITY

Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

Senate Bill 650 (S-3) as passed by the Senate

Sponsor: Sen. Steven Bieda

House Committee: Families, Children, and Seniors

Senate Committee: Families, Seniors and Human Services

Complete to 12-18-18

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

Senate Bill 650 would amend the Social Welfare Act to expand the “good cause” reasons that excuse a recipient of Family Independence Program assistance from establishing paternity.

Currently, the Act requires Family Independence Program assistance to be denied or terminated if a recipient fails, without *good cause*, to comply with applicable child support requirements, including efforts to establish paternity and assign or obtain child support.

Under the bill, *good cause* for not complying with those requirements would include an instance in which the mother is a victim of domestic violence, the child is a victim of abuse, the child was conceived as the result of nonconsensual sexual penetration, or the child was conceived as a result of acts for which the child’s biological father was convicted of criminal sexual conduct.

The bill specifies that the department would have to include in the assistance application information booklet information explaining that the applicant is excused from providing information establishing paternity and obtaining child support if there is good cause as described above.

The bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

MCL 400.57e and 400.57g

FISCAL IMPACT:

The provisions amending child support requirements for Family Independence Program (FIP) compliance included in this bill would result in indeterminate increases in program costs to the State.

Applicants and current FIP recipients must comply with child support requirements in order to receive program benefits. Pursuant to the Social Welfare Act, FIP child support requirements include efforts to establish paternity and assign or obtain child support, unless good cause exists to exempt the applicant from the requirements. Good cause currently includes instances in which attempting to comply with FIP child support requirements

would harm the child or result in physical and/or emotional harm to the child or applicant. This bill would expand upon the definition of good cause by including—but not limiting the definition to—instances in which the mother is a victim of domestic abuse; the child is a victim of abuse; or the child was conceived as a result of criminal sexual conduct.

Data are not currently available to estimate the number of FIP cases in which the proposed changes in child support requirements would apply to. Any increase in costs to the state would result from FIP cases in which benefits would be higher due to recipients not receiving child support income, as well as any increase in caseload resulting from applicants who have previously forgone obtaining FIP assistance in order to avoid complying with current child support requirements.

As of September 2018, the average number of FIP cases statewide for FY 2017-18 was 17,991 per month, which includes an average of 41,914 recipients per month. FIP is primarily funded through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) federal block grant, which comprises 82% of the \$75.2 million appropriated for the program in FY 2018-19.

The bill's provision requiring the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to include these child support requirement changes in the assistance application information booklet would likely result in minor, indeterminate administrative costs for DHHS.

The provisions of this bill would not result in any fiscal impact on local units of government.

Legislative Analyst: E. Best
Fiscal Analyst: Kent Dell

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.