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P U B L I C H E A R I N G

before

ASSEMBLY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

ASSEMBLY BILL Nos. 4700, 4701, 4702, 4703, 4704, 4705

(AFDC Legislation)

August 23, 1991
11:20 a.m.
Institute for Human Development
Atlantic City, New Jersey

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman George J. Otlowski, Chairman

ALSO PRESENT:

Assemblyman Wayne R. Bryant
District 5

Assemblyman Fred Scerni
District 2

David Price
Office of Legislative Services
Aide, Assembly Health and Human
Services Committee

* * * * *

Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
Office of Legislative Services
Public Information Office
Hearing Unit
162 West State Street
CN 068
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

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New Jersey State Legislature

ASSEMBLY HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES COMMITTEE
STATE HOUSE ANNEX, CN-068
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0068
(609) 292-1646

GEORGE J. OTLOWSKI
CHAIRMAN

THOMAS J. DEVERIN
VICE-CHAIRMAN

ANN A. MULLEN
HAROLD L. COLBURN, JR.
NICHOLAS R. FELICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Assembly Health and Human Services Committee will hold a public hearing on the following legislation:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| A-4700
Bryant | The "Family Development Act". |
| A-4701
Bryant | Establishes comprehensive social services information hotline in DHS. |
| A-4702
Bryant | Provides for AFDC eligibility for certain family members. |
| A-4703
Bryant | Directs the Commissioner of Human Services to revise the schedule of AFDC benefit amounts. |
| A-4704
Bryant | Directs DHS to allow full benefits for AFDC two parent families. |
| A-4705
Bryant | Establishes the Council on Community Restoration. |

The hearing will be held on Friday, August 23, 1991 at 11:00 A.M. in the second floor multipurpose room of the Institute for Human Development, 1315 Pacific Avenue, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

The public may address comments and questions to David Price, Committee Aide and persons wishing to testify should contact Pamela Chisolm, secretary, at (609) 292-1646. Those persons presenting written testimony should provide 10 copies to the committee on the day of the hearing.

Issued 7/26/91

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED APRIL 15, 1991

By Assemblyman BRYANT

1 AN ACT concerning family development, supplementing Title 44
2 of the Revised Statutes and amending P.L.1947, c.156,
3 P.L.1987, c.282 and P.L.1987, c.283.

4
5 BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
6 *State of New Jersey:*

7 1. (New section) This act shall be known and may be cited as
8 the "Family Development Act."

9 2. (New section) The Legislature finds and declares that
10 within New Jersey, there are counties and municipalities which
11 are experiencing high unemployment and underemployment
12 among their populations, and that these are conditions which
13 contribute to the overall economic decline of the State and
14 generally threaten the public health, safety, morals and welfare;
15 that the population within each of these counties and
16 municipalities consists of a disproportionate number of
17 economically disadvantaged and unskilled individuals who face
18 crippling barriers to employment and who are in need of special
19 training in order to become members of the productive work
20 force; that the REACH program established pursuant to P.L.1987,
21 c.282 (C.44:10-9 et seq.) has not and cannot, as it is currently
22 operating, provide the variety or intensity of services to address
23 the many and deep-rooted needs of the populations of these
24 counties and municipalities; and that the obstacles to economic
25 achievement and permanent escape from the bonds of welfare
26 dependency for these people can only be overcome through a new
27 initiative which offers intensified and coordinated services that
28 go beyond the parameters of the REACH program and address the
29 educational, vocational and other needs of the public assistance
30 recipient's family, rather than the recipient alone.

31 3. (New section) As used in this act:

32 "Benefits" means benefits received under the program of aid to
33 families with dependent children established pursuant to
34 P.L.1959, c.86 (C.44:10-1 et seq.).

35 "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Human Services.

36 "Department" means the Department of Human Services.

37 "Program" means the "Family Development Initiative"
38 established pursuant to this act.

39 "Recipient" means a adult recipient of benefits under the
40 program of aid to families with dependent children.

EXPLANATION--Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the
above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 4. (New section) The Family Development Initiative is
2 established in the Division of Economic Assistance of the
3 Department of Human Services. The objective of the Family
4 Development Initiative is to enable recipients of aid to families
5 with dependent children to secure permanent full-time
6 unsubsidized jobs, preferably in the private sector, with wages
7 and benefits that are adequate to support their families, and to
8 ensure that these individuals and their family members obtain the
9 necessary educational skills and vocational training, as
10 appropriate, to secure these kinds of jobs, in addition to other
11 health-related, social, educational and vocational services that
12 may be necessary to assist the family.

13 The commissioner shall initially establish the program in the
14 three counties which have the largest numbers of recipients,
15 during the first year of the operation of the program. During the
16 two succeeding years, the commissioner shall phase in the
17 program in the remaining counties Statewide. As the program is
18 implemented in each county, the fiscal and personnel resources of
19 State, county and municipal government agencies which are being
20 utilized by the REACH program established pursuant to P.L.1987,
21 c.282 (C.44:10-9 et seq.) shall be transferred to the program, and
22 the REACH program shall be terminated in that county.

23 5. (New section) a. A recipient whose youngest child is two
24 years of age or older shall participate in education, vocational
25 assessment and training, or employment activities, or a
26 combination thereof, under the program.

27 b. A recipient whose youngest child is less than two years of
28 age shall participate in counseling and vocational assessment
29 activities and the development of a family plan pursuant to
30 section 7 of this act, and may voluntarily participate in
31 education, vocational training or employment activities, or a
32 combination thereof, under the program.

33 6. (New section) A recipient who without good cause fails or
34 refuses to enroll and actively participate in the program, which
35 includes failure to attend or make satisfactory academic progress
36 in educational or vocational training classes under the program,
37 according to rules and regulations adopted by the commissioner,
38 shall thereupon, as determined by the commissioner, be subject to
39 a reduction in benefits of at least 20%, or shall become ineligible
40 for benefits for a period of at least 90 days. The period of
41 ineligibility shall commence at the end of the current benefit
42 period, and at the end of the period the recipient shall again
43 become eligible for benefits, if the recipient complies with all
44 requirements of the program as determined by the commissioner
45 or shows a willingness to do so. For a subsequent failure or
46 refusal to enroll and actively participate in the program without
47 good cause, the recipient may be subject to a termination of
48 benefits.

1 7. (New section) a. Services shall be provided to each
2 participant in the program according to a family plan which
3 includes a written contract. The contract shall be signed by the
4 participant and a program representative who shall act as a case
5 manager, advocate and broker of services for the participant and
6 the participant's family, and shall set forth the specific mutual
7 obligations of the participant and the program and a detailed plan
8 for the participant and the participant's family. The family plan
9 and contract, which shall explicitly state the services that the
10 program will provide to the participant, shall be reviewed by both
11 the participant and the program representative at least once a
12 year and may be revised from time to time according to the
13 needs of the participant, the participant's family and the
14 program.

15 b. The services to be provided under the program shall include,
16 but not be limited to: job development and placement in
17 full-time permanent jobs, preferably in the private sector;
18 counseling and vocational assessment; intensive remedial
19 education, including instruction in English-as-a-second language;
20 job search assistance; community work experience; employment
21 skills training focused on a specific job; and on-the-job training
22 in an employment setting.

23 c. The program shall be designed to ensure that each
24 participant and member of the participant's family, as age
25 appropriate, has attained the equivalent of a high school degree,
26 before assigning that person to a vocational-related activity
27 under the program.

28 d. The program shall assign one or more persons in each county
29 which is participating in the program to be responsible, on a
30 full-time basis, for job development for persons who have
31 completed their educational or training activities under the
32 program, with an emphasis on finding and creating permanent
33 full-time unsubsidized jobs, preferably in the private sector,
34 which offer wages and benefits that are adequate to support
35 recipients and their families.

36 e. The commissioner, in consultation with the Commissioner of
37 Commerce, Energy and Economic Development, shall seek to
38 recruit private sector employers in each county to offer
39 employment to persons who have completed their educational or
40 training activities under the program.

41 f. The commissioner, in consultation with the Chancellor of
42 Higher Education, shall develop a scholarship program to provide
43 tuition and related financial assistance, as needed, to each
44 program participant or other family member who has been
45 accepted into an institution of higher education or a
46 post-secondary vocational training program, according to
47 standards established by the commissioner.

48 g. The program shall provide supportive services to a program

1 participant as a last resort when no other source is available
2 therefor and when these services are included in the family plan.
3 The supportive services shall include, but not be limited to, one
4 or more of the following:

5 (1) day care services for the participant's child, to be
6 purchased through a voucher issued to the participant by the
7 program, which may be used to obtain care at a State licensed
8 child care center or school age child care program, or at a family
9 day care home approved by the department, that accepts the
10 voucher;

11 (2) transportation services, to be provided directly by the
12 program or through an allowance or other means of subsidy by
13 which the participant may purchase transportation; and

14 (3) health insurance coverage, to be provided by a participant's
15 employer, or through a continuation of Medicaid benefits
16 pursuant to P.L.1968, c.413 (C.30:4D-1 et seq.) for up to one year
17 if the participant becomes ineligible for financial assistance
18 under P.L.1959, c.86 (C.44:10-1 et seq.) as a result of earned
19 income.

20 8. (New section) In each county, the designated representative
21 of the commissioner responsible for the development of a family
22 plan for a participant in the program shall conduct an assessment
23 of the health-related, social, educational and vocational needs of
24 the participant's family unit in preparing the family plan for the
25 participant. If the designated representative determines that the
26 participant faces multiple barriers to employment, is not eligible
27 for the services of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
28 pursuant to P.L.1955, c.64 (C.34:16-20 et seq.), or needs special
29 individualized services in order to be able to maintain steady
30 employment after participation in the program, or that any of the
31 other family members require educational services or vocational
32 training, then the designated representative shall include in the
33 family plan a requirement that the participant, or the other
34 family members, as appropriate, receive special services in
35 addition to the other services provided to the participant
36 pursuant to this act. The designated representative shall then
37 arrange for the provision of these services. These special
38 services may include: individual counseling; family counseling;
39 parental skill training and development; individualized job
40 training services; substance abuse counseling; individualized
41 remedial educational or tutorial services for the participant or
42 other family members based upon the assessment of the family's
43 educational needs; and any other health-related, counseling,
44 educational or vocational training services determined by the
45 commissioner to be necessary to provide each family member
46 who is eligible for benefits with the basic skills that are
47 necessary to secure and maintain gainful employment, and to
48 prepare the program participant for steady employment following

1 participation in the program.

2 The special services shall be provided to program participants
3 in accordance with guidelines established by the commissioner, in
4 consultation with the Commissioners of Health, Labor, Education,
5 Community Affairs, and Commerce, Energy and Economic
6 Development, and with the implementation plans established for
7 each county pursuant to this act.

8 9. (New section) The commissioner shall establish a program
9 office in each of the three counties with the largest number of
10 recipients, to be designated as a family resource center. The
11 center shall provide all program enrollment and case management
12 services, including counseling and health-related, social,
13 educational and vocational needs assessment services, to program
14 participants and their families in a single setting within the
15 county, in order to facilitate their access to these services.

16 10. (New section) The commissioner shall take such actions as
17 are necessary to reorganize the services provided by the Divisions
18 of Economic Assistance, Youth and Family Services, and Mental
19 Health and Hospitals of the department, the county welfare
20 agencies and private nonprofit agencies and organizations with
21 which the department contracts to provide services, and to
22 promote innovative approaches to the delivery of program
23 services through partnerships between public and private entities,
24 and between nonprofit and for-profit entities within the private
25 sector, in order to provide for the most effective and efficient
26 use of public and private resources in the implementation and
27 operation of the program.

28 11. (New section) a. The commissioner shall establish a
29 planning council in each county to determine the most effective
30 way to organize and administer the program in that county. The
31 planning council shall include no less than 12 and no more than 15
32 persons and shall, at a minimum, include: the director of the
33 program in each county, who shall be designated by the
34 commissioner; the director of the county welfare agency; a
35 member of the board of chosen freeholders; a representative of
36 the county human services advisory council; a representative of
37 the local Private Industry Council established pursuant to the
38 "Job Training Partnership Act," Pub.L.97-300 (29 U.S.C. §1501 et
39 al.), or of a successor entity as may be provided by federal law; a
40 representative of a child care agency in the county; a
41 representative of the local community college; a representative
42 of the county vocational school; a representative of private
43 business or industry in that county; a recipient of aid to families
44 with dependent children residing in that county; a representative
45 of the commissioner; and a representative of the Division of
46 Youth and Family Services.

47 b. The council shall develop a program implementation plan
48 for the county which shall ensure that training and education

1 services provided by the program in that county reflect local
2 needs and resources and that supportive services provided to
3 program participants utilize existing local arrangements
4 wherever possible. The plan shall also designate a county agency
5 to coordinate services provided by the program and to report to
6 the commissioner on program implementation and effectiveness,
7 according to criteria and standards established by the
8 commissioner.

9 12. (New section) The commissioner shall reimburse a county
10 for 100% of the reasonable costs associated with administration
11 of the program and program services which are not reimbursed by
12 the federal government.

13 13. Section 8 of P.L.1947, c.156 (C.44:8-114) is amended to
14 read as follows:

15 8. The State shall provide, through each municipality, public
16 assistance to the persons eligible therefor, residing therein or
17 otherwise when so provided by law, which assistance shall be fully
18 funded by the State and administered by a local assistance board
19 according to law and in accordance with this act and with such
20 rules and regulations as may be promulgated by the commissioner.

21 [As hereinafter provided, employable persons] An employable
22 person who is receiving public assistance shall be required, except
23 when good cause exists, to [perform such public work as shall be
24 assigned to them by the Division of Employment Services in the
25 Department of Labor or, in the manner described herein, by the
26 director of welfare of the municipality providing public
27 assistance.

28 The division shall provide for the establishment of public work
29 programs for the assignment of employable persons in receipt of
30 public assistance. Public work may include the performance of
31 work for the municipality providing public assistance, or the
32 performance of work in the operation of or in an activity of a
33 nonprofit agency or institution pursuant to a contract with the
34 municipality. Public work projects to which employable persons
35 are assigned by the division may include work for other levels of
36 government besides the municipality, and shall be approved by
37 the Commissioner of Labor. If a recipient is injured while
38 performing work assigned by the division or a municipal welfare
39 director pursuant to this act, liability for such injury shall be
40 assumed by the State, pursuant to the Workers' Compensation
41 Act, R.S.34:15-1 et seq. No State agency, municipality or any
42 governmental or nonprofit agency or institution which has
43 contracted with the division or a municipality pursuant to this
44 act, or its employees, shall be liable in a civil suit for damages
45 for any injury sustained by a recipient while performing work
46 required by this act.

47 The director of welfare in the municipality shall notify the
48 division of persons in receipt of public assistance who, in his

1 judgment, and in accordance with the regulations established by
2 the Commissioner of Human Services, are able to perform work.
3 From the time that he has so notified the division until such time
4 as the division shall assign such persons to a public work project,
5 the director of welfare shall assign such employable persons to
6 perform public work if such work is available, and shall notify the
7 division. The division may approve any such employment assigned
8 by the director of welfare without further need for assignment or
9 reassignment or may make another assignment. In assigning
10 public work, the director of welfare or the division, as the case
11 may be, shall be satisfied that such employable persons will not
12 be used to replace any regular employees of any department or
13 unit of such municipality.

14 In assigning persons to public work in a nonprofit agency or
15 institution, the division or the director of welfare, as the case
16 may be, shall also be satisfied that such assignment will not
17 result in the displacement of regular employees of the agency or
18 institution.

19 The Commissioner of Labor shall establish regulations
20 concerning the appropriateness of work-site assignments.

21 Persons performing such work assigned by the division or the
22 director of welfare shall work only the number of hours equal to
23 the amount of their grant divided by an hourly wage rate
24 commensurate with beginning regular employees similarly
25 employed. Performance of such work shall result in payment to
26 the person of his public assistance grant] enroll and actively
27 participate in the Family Development Initiative established
28 pursuant to P.L..... c..... (C.....) (now pending before the
29 Legislature as this bill).

30 Each person receiving public assistance who is required to
31 participate in the Family Development Initiative shall receive a
32 health-related, social, educational and vocational assessment and
33 those services, as appropriate, which are provided to other
34 participants in that program pursuant to P.L....., c.....
35 (C.....) (now pending before the Legislature as this bill).

36 Any person who without good cause fails or refuses to [report
37 for or to perform work to which he has been assigned by the
38 director of welfare or the division] enroll and actively participate
39 in the Family Development Initiative, which includes failure to
40 attend or make satisfactory academic progress in educational or
41 vocational training classes under the program, according to rules
42 and regulations adopted by the commissioner, shall thereupon, as
43 determined by the commissioner, be subject to a reduction in
44 benefits of at least 20%, or shall become ineligible for public
45 assistance for a period of at least 90 days, which shall commence
46 at the end of the current benefit period and at the end of which
47 the person shall again become eligible for public assistance;
48 provided that he [reports for and performs work to which he has

1 been assigned] complies with all requirements of the Family
 2 Development Initiative as determined by the commissioner or
 3 shows his willingness to do so. For a subsequent failure or refusal
 4 to enroll and actively participate in the program without good
 5 cause, the person may be subject to a termination of benefits.

6 [Good cause for failure or refusal to report for or to perform
 7 work shall include, but shall not be limited to: working conditions
 8 which are a substantial risk to health and safety; physical
 9 inability to engage in a particular type of work; or lack of a
 10 reasonable means of transportation.

11 Willingness to report for or to perform work shall be
 12 demonstrated by maintaining a current registration with the
 13 division; by reporting to a division office upon request and
 14 providing all required information; by reporting for employment
 15 interviews as scheduled by the division; by accepting employment
 16 or better employment when offered, whether or not the offer is
 17 made through or referred by the division; by accepting training
 18 for employment as offered when the person is unemployed; and by
 19 continuing in employment training, unless the person has good
 20 cause to fail or refuse to report for or to perform the work to
 21 which the person has been assigned.]

22 (cf: P.L.1990. c.66. s.17)

23 14. Section 11 of P.L.1987, c.282 is amended to read as follows:

24 11. This act shall take effect immediately[, but shall remain
 25 inoperative until the enactment into law of Senate Bill No. 2047
 26 or Assembly Bill No. 4182 of 1986-1987 or a similar bill; and
 27 sections 1 through 8, inclusive, and section 10 shall remain
 28 inoperative until the submission by the commissioner to the
 29 Senate Revenue, Finance and Appropriations Committee and the
 30 General Assembly Appropriations Committee, or their successor
 31 committees, of the REACH program implementation report
 32 required pursuant to subsection a. of section 9 of this act] and
 33 shall expire three years after the effective date of P.L.....
 34 c..... (C.....) (now pending before the Legislature as this
 35 bill).

36 (cf: P.L.1987. c.282. s.11)

37 15. Section 1 of P.L.1987, c.283 (C.30:4D-6b) is amended to
 38 read as follows:

39 1. The Legislature finds and declares that: the protection
 40 afforded recipients of aid to families with dependent children
 41 (AFDC) pursuant to P.L.1959, c.86 (C.44:10-1 et seq.), through
 42 the provision of health care coverage under the Medicaid
 43 program, established pursuant to P.L.1968, c.413 (C.30:4D-1 et
 44 seq.), is a major disincentive to public assistance recipients who
 45 are considering employment; and while the federal government
 46 has recognized the relationship between medical coverage and
 47 successful employment initiatives through its policy of allowing
 48 limited extensions of Medicaid to former AFDC recipients who

1 lose eligibility for both programs as a result of employment, only
2 12% of those entering employment receive Medicaid extensions
3 for more than four months because of the strict income eligibility
4 requirements.

5 The Legislature further finds and declares that: New Jersey's
6 welfare reform program[, known as REACH.] aims to transform
7 the present AFDC program, which is a payment system, into an
8 employment and training program the goal of which is to assist
9 New Jersey's welfare families to realize self-sufficiency; and,
10 therefore, it is necessary to extend Medicaid coverage for a
11 period of up to 12 months to those AFDC recipients who lose
12 eligibility for AFDC and Medicaid as a result of employment
13 obtained through the welfare program:

14 (cf: P.L.1987, c.283, s.1)

15 16. (New section) The commissioner, in consultation with the
16 Commissioners of Health, Labor, Education, and Commerce and
17 Economic Development, and the Chancellor of Higher Education,
18 shall report to the Governor and the Legislature no later than
19 three years after the effective date of this act, and annually
20 thereafter, on the effectiveness of the program in meeting its
21 objectives, accompanying that report with any recommendations
22 for changes in the law or regulations governing the program that
23 the commissioner deems necessary.

24 17. There is transferred \$10,000,000 from the Grants-In-Aid
25 account for the Realizing Economic Achievement (REACH)
26 Program within the General Fund to provide the funds necessary
27 to implement the Family Development Initiative.

28 18. The commissioner, pursuant to the "Administrative
29 Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), shall adopt
30 rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this act.

31 19. This act shall take effect on the 90th day after the
32 effective date of this act, except that the commissioner may
33 take such actions prior to the effective date as are necessary to
34 effectuate the purposes of this act.

35 36 37 STATEMENT

38
39 This bill establishes the "Family Development Initiative" in the
40 Department of Human Services. The Commissioner of Human
41 Services shall initially establish the program in the three counties
42 with the largest numbers of aid to families with dependent
43 children (AFDC) recipients during the first year of the program's
44 operation. The other counties will be phased in during a
45 subsequent two-year period. The REACH program established
46 pursuant to P.L.1987, c.282 (C.44:10-9 et seq.) is to be phased out
47 on a county-by-county basis as the Family Development
48 Initiative is implemented in that county, with the fiscal and

1 personnel resources of public agencies which are being utilized by
2 the REACH program transferred to the Family Development
3 Initiative. The bill provides for the expiration of P.L.1987. c.282
4 three years after the effective date of the bill.

5 The REACH program has failed to provide a viable
6 programmatic approach to the increasing problem of welfare
7 dependency in New Jersey, with its attendant features of broken
8 families and wasted lives. A new more comprehensive approach
9 to addressing the needs and responsibilities of public assistance
10 recipients is required, with an emphasis on strengthening
11 families, remedying basic deficiencies in educational skills,
12 developing real private sector job opportunities with a future, and
13 providing meaningful penalties for noncompliance.

14 The Family Development Initiative created under this bill will
15 expand the range and intensity of services available to
16 participants in the existing REACH program and enlarge the
17 programmatic focus to include the entire family and its
18 health-related, social, educational and vocational needs, while
19 emphasizing the role of private sector employers in the job
20 creation and training components of the program. In addition,
21 the new program will expand the mandate of the REACH program
22 to include recipients of general public assistance administered by
23 the municipalities as program participants. The bill stipulates
24 those penalties to be imposed on AFDC and general public
25 assistance recipients who fail to comply with program
26 requirements without good cause, as determined by the
27 Commissioner of Human Services.

28 The Family Development Initiative will be designed to ensure
29 that each participant and member of the participant's family, as
30 age appropriate, has attained the equivalent of a high school
31 degree, before assigning that person to a vocational-related
32 activity under the program.

33 The program will be required to assign one or more persons in
34 each county which is participating in the program to be
35 responsible, on a full-time basis, for job development for persons
36 who have completed their educational or training activities under
37 the program, with an emphasis on finding and creating permanent
38 full-time unsubsidized jobs, preferably in the private sector,
39 which offer wages and benefits that are adequate to support
40 participants and their families.

41 The bill directs the Commissioner of Human Services, in
42 consultation with the Commissioner of the Department of
43 Commerce, Energy and Economic Development, to seek to
44 recruit private sector employers in each county to offer
45 employment to persons who have completed their educational or
46 training activities under the program.

47 The bill transfers \$10 million from the budget for the REACH
48 program to cover the costs of implementing the Family

1 Development Initiative.

2 Finally, the bill requires that the Commissioner of Human
3 Services, in consultation with the Commissioners of Health,
4 Labor, Education, and Commerce and Economic Development,
5 and the Chancellor of Higher Education, report to the Governor
6 and the Legislature no later than three years after the effective
7 date of the bill, and annually thereafter, on the effectiveness of
8 the Family Development Initiative.

9

10

11 HUMAN SERVICES

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Designated the "Family Development Act."

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED APRIL 15, 1991

By Assemblyman BRYANT

1 AN ACT establishing a comprehensive social services information
2 hotline in the Department of Human Services and
3 supplementing Title 30 of the Revised Statutes.

4
5 BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the
6 State of New Jersey:

7 1. a. The Commissioner of Human Services, in consultation
8 with the Commissioners of Community Affairs, Health and Labor,
9 shall establish and maintain on a 24-hour daily basis a
10 comprehensive social services information toll-free telephone
11 hotline service, operating through one of the existing telephone
12 hotline services of the department. The hotline service shall use
13 a computerized Statewide social services data bank to be
14 developed by the Department of Human Services. The hotline
15 service shall receive and respond to calls from persons seeking
16 information and referrals concerning agencies and programs
17 which provide various social services, including but not limited
18 to: child care, child abuse emergency response, job skills
19 training, services for victims of domestic violence, alcohol and
20 drug abuse, home health care, senior citizen programs, rental
21 assistance, services for persons with developmental disabilities,
22 mental health programs and services for the deaf, as well as
23 information about public assistance, Medicaid, Pharmaceutical
24 Assistance to the Aged and Disabled, Lifeline, Hearing Aid
25 Assistance for the Aged and Disabled, food stamps and home
26 energy assistance.

27 b. The Commissioner of Human Services, in conjunction with
28 the Commissioners of Community Affairs, Health and Labor,
29 shall take such actions as are necessary to consolidate existing
30 State telephone hotline services into the comprehensive social
31 services information toll-free telephone hotline service, and
32 thereby eliminate duplicative telephone hotline services.

33 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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37
38 This bill establishes a 24-hour social services information
39 hotline in the Department of Human Services to serve as a
40 comprehensive information and referral source for social service
41 programs and agencies throughout the State. This new hotline
42 will serve to consolidate and expand the information and

1 referral resources that are currently available through a number
2 of telephone hotlines being provided by the State, and thereby
3 offer greater convenience to persons who may have multiple
4 social service needs and are seeking information and assistance
5 about one or more different kinds of agencies or programs.

6

7

8

HUMAN SERVICES

9

10 Establishes comprehensive social services information hotline in
11 the Department of Human Services.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED APRIL 15, 1991

By Assemblyman BRYANT

1 AN ACT concerning benefits under the program of aid to
2 families with dependent children and supplementing P.L.1959,
3 c.86 (C.44:10-1 et seq.).
4

5 BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
6 *State of New Jersey:*

7 1. As used in this act:

8 "Benefits" means benefits provided under the program of aid to
9 families with dependent children established pursuant to
10 P.L.1959, c.86 (C.44:10-1 et seq.).

11 "Eligible parent" means a person who is or would be eligible for
12 benefits based upon the income of that person and the person's
13 natural children.

14 2. a. The Commissioner of Human Services shall, no later than
15 the 90th day after the effective date of this act, revise the
16 schedule of benefits in accordance with the provisions of
17 subsection b. of this section.

18 b. An eligible parent who is married to a person who is not the
19 parent of one or more of the eligible parent's children shall not
20 be eligible for benefits if the household income exceeds the State
21 eligibility standard for benefits; however, the eligible parent's
22 natural children shall be eligible for benefits according to a
23 sliding income scale established by the commissioner which does
24 not take into account the income of the eligible parent's spouse,
25 if the total annual household income does not exceed 150% of the
26 official poverty level, adjusted for family size, established
27 pursuant to section 673 (2) of Subtitle B, the "Community
28 Services Block Grant Act," of Pub.L.97-35 (42 U.S.C. § 9902 (2)).
29 The spouse of the eligible parent and the spouse's natural child,
30 if any, who is not the eligible parent's natural child, who is living
31 with the family shall not be eligible for benefits.

32 3. The Commissioner of Human Services, pursuant to the
33 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
34 seq.), shall adopt rules and regulations to implement the
35 provisions of this act.

36 4 This act shall take effect immediately.
37

38 STATEMENT
39

40 This bill directs the Commissioner of Human Services to revise
41 the rules and regulations governing the program of Aid to
42 Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) for a family, in which

1 the income of one parent and that parent's natural children does
2 not exceed the State eligibility standard for the program.

3 The bill provides, for example, that if an AFDC-eligible
4 mother (based upon her income and that of her natural children)
5 is married to a person who is not the parent of one or more of the
6 mother's children, the mother shall not be eligible for AFDC
7 benefits if the household income exceeds the State eligibility
8 standard for benefits; however, the mother's natural children
9 shall be eligible for benefits according to a sliding income scale
10 established by the commissioner which does not take into account
11 the income of the mother's husband, if the total annual household
12 income does not exceed 150% of the official poverty level. The
13 mother's husband and his natural child, if any, who is not the
14 mother's natural child, who is living with the family would not be
15 eligible for benefits.

16 This bill is intended to encourage marriage and family stability
17 among AFDC recipients, by enabling the natural child of a
18 recipient to receive benefits after the recipient marries, provided
19 that the father's income does not exceed 150% of the poverty
20 level, while ensuring that fathers meet the financial
21 responsibilities of supporting their spouses and their natural
22 children. The promotion of two-parent families among AFDC
23 recipients should enable more recipients to become economically
24 self-sufficient.

25
26
27 HUMAN SERVICES

28
29 Provides for AFDC eligibility for certain family members.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED APRIL 15, 1991

By Assemblyman BRYANT

1 AN ACT revising benefits under the program of aid to families
2 with dependent children and supplementing P.L.1959, c.86
3 (C.44:10-1 et seq.).
4

5 BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
6 *State of New Jersey:*

7 1. The Commissioner of Human Services shall, no later than
8 the 180th day after the effective date of this act, revise the
9 schedule of benefits to be paid to a recipient family under the
10 program of aid to families with dependent children (AFDC)
11 established pursuant to P.L.1959, c.86 (C.44:10-1 et seq.), by
12 eliminating the increment in benefits under the program for
13 which that family would otherwise be eligible as a result of the
14 birth of a child during the period in which the family is eligible
15 for AFDC benefits, or during a temporary period in which the
16 mother or family is ineligible for AFDC benefits pursuant to a
17 penalty imposed by the commissioner for failure to comply with
18 benefit eligibility requirements, subsequent to which the family is
19 again eligible for benefits. The commissioner shall provide
20 instead that a recipient family in which the mother gives birth to
21 an additional child during the period of her eligibility for AFDC
22 benefits, or during a temporary penalty period of ineligibility for
23 benefits, may receive additional benefits only pursuant to section
24 2 of this act, except in the case of a general increase in the
25 amount of AFDC benefits which is provided to all program
26 recipients.

27 2. In the case of an AFDC recipient family in which the
28 mother gives birth to an additional child during the period in
29 which the family is eligible for AFDC benefits, or during a
30 temporary penalty period of ineligibility for benefits subsequent
31 to which the family or mother again becomes eligible for
32 benefits, the Commissioner of Human Services, subject to federal
33 approval, shall provide that in computing the amount of financial
34 assistance which is eligible for federal reimbursement to be
35 granted to that family, the following shall be deducted from the
36 monthly earned income of each employed person in the family:

37 a. those earned income disregards provided for under federal
38 law as set forth at N.J.A.C.10:82-4.4; and

39 b. an additional amount earned by each employed person
40 which, at a maximum, is equal to the difference between the
41 amount of subsection a. of this section and 25% of the monthly

1 payment of financial assistance, adjusted for family size.

2 3. The Commissioner of Human Services, pursuant to the
3 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
4 seq.), shall adopt rules and regulations to implement the
5 provisions of this act.

6 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

7

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STATEMENT

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11 This bill directs the Commissioner of Human Services to revise
12 the schedule of benefits to be paid to a recipient family under the
13 program of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).
14 The bill would eliminate the increment in AFDC benefits for
15 which a family would otherwise be eligible as a result of the birth
16 of a child during the period in which the family is eligible for
17 AFDC benefits, or during a temporary period in which the family
18 is ineligible for AFDC benefits pursuant to a penalty imposed by
19 the commissioner for failure to comply with benefit eligibility
20 requirements, subsequent to which the family again becomes
21 eligible for benefits, and provide instead that a recipient family
22 in which the mother gives birth to an additional child during the
23 period in which the family is AFDC-eligible, or during the
24 penalty period, may receive additional benefits only through an
25 increased earned income disregard. The family would still be
26 entitled to receive additional benefits as a result of any general
27 increase in the amount of the monthly grant for all AFDC
28 recipients.

29 The bill would increase the earned income disregard for
30 employed AFDC recipients to an amount up to 25% of the
31 monthly AFDC grant, adjusted for family size.

32 This bill is intended to discourage AFDC recipients from having
33 additional children during the period of their welfare dependence,
34 while at the same time giving an incentive to work to those
35 families that do have additional children by allowing them to earn
36 up to 25% of their monthly grant and still retain their eligibility
37 for AFDC benefits.

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HUMAN SERVICES

41

42 Directs Commissioner of Human Services to revise schedule of
43 AFDC benefit amounts.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED APRIL 15, 1991

By Assemblyman BRYANT

1 AN ACT concerning benefits to certain families under the
2 program of aid to families with dependent children and
3 supplementing P.L.1959, c.86 (C.44:10-1 et seq.).
4

5 BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
6 *State of New Jersey:*

7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. This State has established welfare reform as one of the
9 major priorities of State government, with the intended goal of
10 achieving a substantial reduction in the number of residents of
11 this State who are enrolled in the program of aid to families with
12 dependent children (AFDC) established pursuant to P.L.1959, c.86
13 (C.44:10-1 et seq.).

14 b. The primary obligation to support children enrolled in the
15 AFDC program rests with the family and not the State; however,
16 the welfare system as it currently operates in this State
17 undermines family unity by reducing AFDC benefits for families
18 which have able-bodied fathers of AFDC-enrolled children living
19 in the home, even if the family's income, including the father's
20 earnings from full or part-time employment, falls below the
21 State AFDC eligibility standard.

22 c. The welfare system in this State should be designed to
23 promote family stability among AFDC recipients by eliminating
24 the incentive to break up families created by AFDC program
25 regulations, which undermines the ability of AFDC-enrolled
26 mothers to achieve economic self-sufficiency and thereby
27 perpetuates their dependence, and that of their children, on
28 welfare.

29 2. The Commissioner of Human Services shall, no later than
30 the 180th day after the effective date of this act, revise the rules
31 and regulations governing the AFDC program to permit the
32 program to provide full benefits to a family, whose income does
33 not exceed the State eligibility standard, in which the parents are
34 married and reside in the same household, without placing
35 restrictions on the employment of either parent.

36 3. The Commissioner of Human Services, pursuant to the
37 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
38 seq.), shall adopt rules and regulations to implement the
39 provisions of this act.

40 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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This bill directs the Commissioner of Human Services to revise the rules and regulations governing the program of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) to allow full AFDC benefits to be paid to families, whose incomes do not exceed the State AFDC eligibility standard, in which both parents are married and reside in the same house, without placing restrictions on the employment of either parent. Currently, these families suffer a reduction in their AFDC benefits, which serves as a disincentive to maintaining family unity and, by promoting the breakup of family units, makes it more difficult for them to achieve economic self-sufficiency and thereby work their way off the AFDC rolls.

HUMAN SERVICES

Directs Commissioner of Human Services to allow full benefits for two-parent families in AFDC program.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED APRIL 15, 1991

By Assemblyman BRYANT

1 AN ACT establishing the Council on Community Restoration and
2 supplementing Title 52 of the Revised Statutes.

3
4 BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the
5 State of New Jersey:

6 1. a. There is established in the Department of Community
7 Affairs the Council on Community Restoration.

8 b. The council shall be composed of:

9 1) a director, to be appointed by and to serve at the pleasure
10 of the Governor;

11 2) the Commissioner of Community Affairs, or his designee, ex
12 officio;

13 3) the Commissioner of Human Services, or his designee, ex
14 officio;

15 4) the Commissioner of Commerce, Energy and Economic
16 Development, or his designee, ex officio;

17 5) the Commissioner of Labor, or his designee, ex officio;

18 6) the Attorney General, or his designee, ex officio;

19 7) the Commissioner of Transportation, or his designee, ex
20 officio;

21 8) the Commissioner of Health, or his designee, ex officio;

22 9) the Commissioner of Education, or his designee, ex officio;

23 10) a representative from and designated by the Economic
24 Development Authority;

25 11) a representative from and designated by the Health Care
26 Finance Authority;

27 12) a representative from and designated by the Housing and
28 Mortgage Finance Authority; and

29 13) five members from the private sector representing
30 nonprofit organizations and professional service providers,
31 appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the
32 Senate, to serve staggered three-year terms. Of the members
33 first to be appointed three shall be appointed for a term of one
34 year each, one for a term of two years, and one for a term of
35 three years. The successors of the members first appointed shall
36 be appointed for three-year terms. Vacancies other than by
37 expiration of terms shall be filled for the unexpired term. Any
38 member may be reappointed.

39 c. The director shall employ a person to serve as secretary to
40 the council. The secretary shall not be a member of the council.

41 d. All members of the council shall serve without
42 compensation but shall be reimbursed for their actual expenses in
43 attending the meetings of the council and in the performance of
44 their other duties.

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ASSEMBLYMAN GEORGE J. OTLOWSKI (Chairman): Ladies and gentlemen, we are going to call this hearing to order. Before I call upon the Majority Leader, I just want to point out briefly that we have been holding a series of meetings on the package that the Majority Leader, Wayne Bryant, has introduced, which has been before this Committee and has been part of the hearings on the restructuring of welfare. The Majority Leader, of course, has been primarily moved by his concern for family life, for the responsibility of citizenship, and for bettering the welfare structure and making it more responsive to the total social structure.

The truth of the matter is, it is a very daring thing he has done, and probably a long time overdue. He has had the courage, the initiative, and the determination to push this. Throughout the hearings there has been a very, very favorable response to his bills, which make up the whole package.

With that, I want to call upon the Majority Leader to make his statement and, as a matter of fact, to give you the benefit of his thinking at this moment. Majority Leader Wayne Bryant.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning to all and to the Institute for Human Development. We appreciate the opportunity of your opening up this facility for us to be here at a public hearing.

As the Chairman has said, we tried to go throughout the State, from north to south to the middle of the State, in order to hear people's views on the realignment of our welfare system in the State of New Jersey.

As I proposed this package-- I proposed the package based first fundamentally on the concept that in order for society to prosper, the family must be the focus. Unfortunately, I viewed the welfare program-- The welfare program does not keep intact, and was not economically based with regard to the nuclear family; keeping man, wife, and

children intact where possible. If that, in fact, is something in public policy that we hold dear -- and we do -- throughout many of our systems -- the nuclear family -- then it appeared to me that minimumly you must, at least in your public policy as it regards the welfare system, make the nuclear family at least on an equal status with a family which does not have both parents. So that was the first thing that we wanted to do in this package.

The second thing we looked at in the present welfare system-- We looked at a system which did not make people holistically dependent upon government, but really drew upon their strengths and gave them a real opportunity to become self-sufficient. It appeared, from all that we had received in State government with analyses of people who were in poverty, that the educational level had a lot to do with it, and there was no reason for us in government to be fooling ourselves to think that education was not important to a person's ability to function within our society, at a level which merely made them self-sufficient. So it became an education package that said we will require that education be the hallmark of what it is that we require of people first.

The third thing was training. Once you educate a person to a certain level, then you must also prepare him for the job market, which would be training. We wanted to make sure that people had the opportunity to go into further training after being educated. Also, we are going to find that many people who are in poverty are going to be our most productive thinkers, who will end up being people who will improve the quality of life, and would want to go into education. So, we gave people a fork in the road: either training or further education.

Lastly what we talked about was putting into a system self-sufficiency, which meant that people would have the capability to make responsible decisions. What has probably

been the most talked about provision, was the provision that once a person was within the system, while we were transforming the person from welfare to self-sufficiency, that any additional dependents would be the responsibility of the individual.

Now, a lot of people have said, "Well, how can you afford to do that?" It is firmly my belief that you can't get people to transform to a working-class society where you set up norms within the programs they are utilizing which do not have any of those basic fundamental ingredients in their program base.

We in America, and in New Jersey, must make decisions whether we have more dependents within our families. We do that every day, and we make decisions on how we will support that new individual. All my program does is give people an opportunity to make that independent responsible decision, and then, at the same time, to consider how they will support that. We provided a way by allowing a disregard for up to 25% of their particular grant, in order to support any additional children.

I have also asked our research staff to look at the issue that was brought up at one of these hearings -- and that is why these hearings are important -- concerning the issue of health care for an additional child, even though there may not be additional financial dollars behind that child. It was brought to my attention that that was a very necessary step that we needed to take, and I agree that the health of that child is very, very important. That is one of the most positive things that has come out of some of our hearings -- to add that provision. Our staff has already indicated that by changing the formula by which a person gets a grant-- That does not change the ability for that child to be covered by Medicaid eligibility. So already built into the bill is the ability for an additional child to have Medicaid eligibility,

which would cover that particular problem by making sure that all of our young people would have the medical ability.

I don't want to go on, because I really want to hear from the people who have come to testify today to give us more insight as to how we can improve upon these bills; what things we might not even have addressed in the bills, which we need to address.

So, Mr. Chairman, without any further ado, I think we can get information from the public who have come to South Jersey. Let me tell you, I am glad to be in Atlantic County, because this is really my home in southern New Jersey. This is the first hearing we are having in southern New Jersey, so I am really particularly interested in hearing what the people in the southern part of New Jersey have to offer to this process.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Thank you very much.

Before we do anything else, I just want to express our thanks to our host, and I understand he is here. We would like to hear from him. We are very grateful for his making these-- Is he here? Is Greg here -- Gregory Bryant?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Yes, he is.

G R E G O R Y B R Y A N T: I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman. We would like to again welcome everyone here and hope that everyone is comfortable, and that you will get information that will help in developing the bills that are currently being considered.

Due to the nature of our work, we have had many of our patients-- They have their own personal experiences with regard to welfare. At this point, we would like to have a couple of them share their own experiences. We would like to hear from Louis Piscopo at this time, and we will continue with maybe one or two other people.

L O U I S J. P I S C O P O: Good morning. My name is--

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Excuse me. How did this get away from me? What are we doing now?

MR. BRYANT: I beg your pardon?

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: May we have your name, please?

MR. PISCOPO: Good morning. My name is Louis Piscopo.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Thank you. And your address, just for the record?

MR. PISCOPO: It's 1315 Pacific Avenue -- right here.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: In Atlantic City?

MR. PISCOPO: Yes. I am a client at the Institute for Human Development. I just recently came out of prison after seven-and-a-half years. I am a member now of the welfare system. Many of us who come out of prison don't have any funding. The majority of us have burned all our bridges, meaning our families and loved ones, so we don't have any funds to help us along the road of recovering from our disease. The Institute provides certain foods and whatnot for us, but--

For instance, my own personal experience now is, we are entitled to a certain stipend of \$25 a month from the welfare system, if they approve it, but it has to go back to the township that you lived in before being incarcerated. Some of them grant this, and some don't. Well, it puts us in a bad position because we are trying to change our lives, and you don't want to have to beg for money to buy personal hygiene needs -- soap, toothpaste. Or, if you have a medical problem-- Most people, or dentists here in the area, don't want to even deal with welfare because the moneys they get, if they do provide any medical care, take such a long time to get to them for their payment.

So, say you have a dental problem, they will pull the tooth. Personally, I would like to keep what few teeth I have left. If we could somehow change the bureaucracy to address the medical cares of many people like myself who are here, it would be a big help in the welfare system, I believe.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Thank you very, very much.

Does the Majority Leader have any questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Let me just ask a particular question. You addressed payment in the health care system. Do you find that the present municipal-- You are really on a municipal welfare system. Does it provide you, really, an opportunity to improve your educational skills, or your training skills?

MR. PISCOPO: I'm not at that phase of the program yet. I don't believe it is welfare, though, that handles-- I know I will have some type of job training available to me, which I intend to pursue, but to get there -- to that point in the program -- you know, there are certain needs that have to be addressed. No one wants to go out and start begging and panhandling for moneys to get the bus to go to these schools, because that is what we did in the past. So, I think the few dollars you do get as a stipend are important in the recovery of the person.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Do you think it is important that your skills be retrained in order that you can successfully get employment?

MR. PISCOPO: Speaking again personally, I am a 46-year-old male who was completely negative most of my adult life. I never learned, as a child, to become a mechanic, a plumber, or whatever. I have no employable skills, so I need some type of training, because how can I go out in the world after I have addressed my disease -- addiction -- and try to compete in the business field, whichever route I decide to take as far as employment?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: So you would take advantage of it if it were available to you? You think that is important in terms of making the transition back into what I call, "regular society"?

MR. PISCOPO: I think that without that, everything else is counterfeit -- if I don't address that issue also.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Thank you very, very much.

At this point, I am going to call upon the representative of this district -- the Assemblyman from this district -- Assemblyman Fred Scerni, who has a statement to make. Then after that, we will go right on with the agenda. Assemblyman Scerni, please?

ASSEMBLYMAN SCERNI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Majority Leader Bryant. Let me, before I begin my remarks with regard to the proposal that is before this Committee today, indicate that it is a pleasure to welcome this Committee and our Majority Leader to Atlantic City. My colleagues in the Assembly know that during the last year-and-a-half we have been working very feverishly to put forth some legislative initiatives that will revitalize this City. So, I welcome you to Atlantic City. It is with great joy that we have been successful in what we have put forth so far. This is a City that has a new attitude, as the Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce would tell you. I certainly welcome all of you to our fair City.

Let me also commend the Chairman for bringing the Committee to Atlantic City and outside of the halls of Trenton. By doing that, Mr. Chairman, you are inviting the participation of many people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to participate in this Committee process. That, in and of itself, is a positive. That, in and of itself, shows the sensitivity of you, Mr. Chairman, the members of this Committee, and the Majority Leader, to the needs of the public.

I would indicate that this setting -- that where we are today is also significant. What goes on here is the rehabilitation of people who have been involved in substance abuse. Quite frankly, this problem is a by-product of the

welfare treadmill. People lose faith and hope in our system, and they become easy victims to the growing drug culture that plagues both our cities and our suburbs.

The proposal that Assemblyman Bryant has laid on the table is designed to end that despair and instill hope and faith by strengthening family values. Under his proposal government, for the first time, will look at each situation in an individual and holistic manner. For the first time, we will look at the other tools that are required, including education, job training, and counseling. These are the tools that are necessary to get someone off the welfare treadmill and into the mainstream of American society.

I would commend the Majority Leader for this proposal. As is the case with many of the Majority Leader's initiatives, it is intriguing; it is stimulating; and it is controversial. But those of us who know Wayne, know that he is not a man who lets controversy stand in the way of his obligation to push for legislation which will improve the quality of life in New Jersey.

I have spent a considerable amount of time reviewing all of the proposals that the Majority Leader has put forward, and I would conclude that we need these proposals desperately. I support the concepts that the Leader has put on the table. Out of all of these proposals, though, one aspect of the program is of special interest to me. There is a bill which would allow women to marry without the loss of their Aid to Dependent Children. Just yesterday, I joined Wayne Bryant as the co-prime sponsor of this bill.

Mr. Chairman, we all know that a number of women who receive welfare, in fact, have men living with them, and that this is contrary to the welfare rules. This has been going on for as long as the welfare system has been in place. Were it known that these men were there, were these women to pursue a marriage with these men, they would, in fact, lose the benefits

that are there for their children. Because of that, these men become invisible in our communities. They do not participate in community activities. They do not coach Little League. If there is a neighborhood problem, they are not in a position to step forward and lend their assistance to the solution of that problem.

So, I believe that this legislation takes a substantial step toward correcting that situation. By permitting the marriage, we are taking traditional middle-class values and permitting the welfare family to incorporate those values into their own home life. That is a proper thing to do. The proposal before us today would replace the previous policy of terminating the benefits with a more fair and more humane program. This program would encourage self-sufficiency for welfare mothers and their families. The mothers would have an incentive to work to boost their own incomes, to offset what would be a gradual reduction in benefits for themselves and their children. This would be in stark contrast to the current system, where many welfare mothers who marry face the automatic and immediate loss of all benefits. It just doesn't make sense to penalize the children because the parents wish to marry.

Mr. Chairman, with programs like this one that we have outlined we can use the foundation of the family to build a new era of self-sufficiency. I urge the Chairman and the Committee members to provide support to these programs that are before the Committee today.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you once again for bringing the Committee to Atlantic City. I thank the Majority Leader for his bold initiative, and I look forward to hearing the testimony of the persons who are with us today. Thank you, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Thank you very, very much. As a matter of fact, I think what you have done here this morning, by your appearance and your remarks, is encouraging,

undoubtedly to the Committee, but certainly to the Majority Leader.

I am going to go to the next person now. (consults with aide) I am told by Mr. Ganges that Greg Bryant has another person whom he wants to testify, and he has promised not to take the meeting away from me. (laughter)

J O H N B R O O K S: Well, gentlemen, my name is John Brooks. I am the Executive Director of the Institute for Human Development. It is really a pleasure for us to host this hearing and to have you gentlemen here in Atlantic City so that you can get a firsthand look at some of the issues that are contained in Assemblyman Bryant's bill, and get some firsthand information about how that bill can help to save taxpayers some money and, of course, give our people a chance to get up off of their knees and do something positive and become responsible citizens.

As a former recipient of welfare myself, when I was in my addiction and my family was on welfare, I am quite familiar with the issues of welfare and how you have to live through that. When I came home from prison, I was able to get a job and I was able to get my wife a job. Then we eventually got our family off of welfare and got our family back together and, of course, we went on, you know, to raise four children and continued our lives.

But the issue about some of the language that is contained in the bill is what I am concerned about. On page 4, line 40, where you talk about substance abuse counseling, I think the language needs to be explicit in talking about the requirements. Make that "substance abuse recovery." I think that if there is a responsibility for the welfare recipient to go through a full-fledged program of recovery, rather than just substance abuse counseling, that if there is monitoring, if there is some validity that a full-fledged program took place, then you could be assured that the kind of training that you

want to take place and the kind of movement that you want to see for families to move off of welfare, can proceed without a whole lot of difficulty.

But, gentlemen, you have to understand that if people do not take care of alcoholism, if they do not take care of addiction, if they are not educated, if they do not take care of their mental health problems, then we will be wasting our time and the taxpayers' money coming up with plans to get them off of welfare and to move the State forward and to move these families forward.

I think, without a doubt, the intent of the legislation is tremendous. I think some of the requirements that I see as important would be the mandating of certain requirements for families if there is the suspect of alcoholism or drug addiction within that family. I think that the training levels also have to be looked at in terms of-- We must educate our young people not only in the areas of substance abuse, but we also have to educate them -- give them sex education, which is going to be quite controversial, because we are going to have to talk about those kinds of things to keep the spread of AIDS and other venereal diseases from going around in a community. Birth rates-- We need to get those under control so we can have families that understand and can plan on how their future is going to go positively.

I have given this some real thought, because a lot of times we see a lot of patients who are indigent who come to us for help. The welfare system does not provide any treatment money for people who are on welfare who come here for treatment. For instance, just to give you a capsulized view, it costs the Institute for Human Development \$25,000 to keep one patient in treatment -- in residential treatment -- for one year. The State pays \$16,800, and that comes from the Block Grant, a Federal grant in Washington, D.C. So, before we ever start off, we are already \$9000 behind anytime we take an

indigent patient in here for treatment. If the municipal government pays the welfare monthly, we get about \$210 a month. So you can see that we are still short about \$7000 in the actual cost of what it takes to keep someone here.

We have to give that person, if he is here, a part of that welfare check so he can have cigarettes, you know, underwear, and things of that nature, those necessities that they have -- cosmetics. So actually, what the Institute gets out of that check is about \$190, \$170, \$180, depending on what municipality is going to pay. Now, some municipalities refuse to even send that check here. Therefore, we are in a constant battle with municipalities in order to try to get paid.

When we developed this program, we developed it so we could educate people not only about their addiction, but also they need general education so they can take care of their families. That is not included in any kind of grant or anything that we pick up, so you can see there is a great need to overhaul how our system relates to the people it is supposed to relate to.

I guess finally one of the most important things is the children. The number of children who are left through the devastation of alcoholism and drug abuse in the State of New Jersey is unbelievable. Not only are these children -- some of them -- born addicted, but some of them are born with all kinds of defects. A classic example of that is that cocaine babies are quite difficult to manage. We will be seeing those same children going into our school system in the next few years. Some of them are now going. How is the system going to handle those kids when they get to our school people, because they have all kinds of disciplinary problems? They are hyper. They have brain damage and everything else. So, special schools are going to have to be set up. We are going to have to have the technology and the understanding to pick up that these children

cannot go through the normal educational system. There has to be some kind of a special system for them.

So I think that, without a doubt, we are on the right track. You should be commended. You gentlemen should be commended for the kind of effort you are making. I would hope that you would use programs like ours and the experience and knowledge we have to help add some kind of language to this bill that will make it so comprehensive that it will mean something to the people it is intended for.

So, that is about the end of my testimony.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Thank you very, very much. Would you just stay put there, please? Your remarks have been very vivid and, as a matter of fact, interesting and important. I would just like to call upon the Majority Leader again. Undoubtedly he has a number of questions he would like to ask you.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: No, I think you have been right on point. I am glad you pointed out about the recovery, because that is the intent of the legislation. I just said to Mr. Ganges to make sure we look at language to add talking about recovery as the goal, in terms of preparing persons for self-sufficiency. You're right. If you can't have them in a recovery situation, there is no way you can prepare them for either job training or education.

Each one of these hearings always brings something more to bear in terms of what we ought to be doing, in terms of our goals. I would just like to say, through you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your remarks. I think we will take a lot of them back and see what we can incorporate further in this bill.

MR. BROOKS: I guess the last people I want to talk about are HIV infected people. As you know, in New Jersey most of the HIV infections are passed on through intravenous drug use. Therefore, if we don't have treatment centers, if we

don't have the capability of treating people, then we can look at the fact that this infection is going to continue to sweep through New Jersey.

Poor people who are on the list who get AIDS the most have the least amount of services made available to them. I think that is another thing you gentlemen have to look at. In New Jersey's level of how much taxes are sent to the Federal government, we are way down the line on how much is returned back to New Jersey in Block Grants so we can address issues such as the AIDS infection and substance abuse in the State of New Jersey. Those are some things directly where I feel you gentlemen who represent us can put pressure on the government to change those formulas, so that those formulas begin to make sense in areas where we have critical needs.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCERNI: Mr. Chairman?

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Just one minute, Mr. Brooks. (Chairman consults with Assemblyman Scerni) The Assemblyman from the district here, of course, is interested in some of the things you have said, and he has some questions.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCERNI: Not so much a question, Mr. Chairman, but an observation. You make an excellent point with regard to the need for health care counseling and sex education counseling. I am sure the Majority Leader will correct me if I am wrong, but I believe it was the intent of the bill to include those kinds of programs. On the page you pointed out to us before, reference is made to health related counseling, and on the page that follows, it indicates that the Commissioners of Health, Labor, and Education will promulgate the various regulations.

I trust that as that happens, the points you are concerned about will be incorporated, because I agree with you completely. They should be incorporated. If I understand the Majority Leader's intent, this is a holistic intent--

MR. BROOKS: Yes--

ASSEMBLYMAN SCERNI: --to cover all the problems.

MR. BROOKS: --it is.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCERNI: I totally agree with your point. I trust that the Majority Leader is on track with you.

MR. BROOKS: We also note -- as an ender -- that if we do not put it into the legislation, and we do not spell it out, then people will interpret it anyway they want to, so that will leave it up for grabs as to whether or not anybody is going to get any service out of it.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Thank you very, very much; thank you. You have been very helpful.

Now may we hear from Julia Clanton, Health Educator, Atlantic County Office of Family Planning, and Antonia Williams, Health Educator, Atlantic County Office of Family Planning? Are they both here? (affirmative response from audience) Who is going to lead this?

JULIA CLANTON: I will.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Would you identify yourself for the record, please?

MS. CLANTON: Yes. I am Julia Clanton, Community Health Educator for Atlantic City Medical Center's Family Planning and Genetics Program. I also wear several hats. My statement is going to sort of piggyback on what Mr. John Brooks has just said. We have been working in this community for over 40 years together, addressing the same subjects.

I started out-- Well, first of all, let me say thank you so much for coming to South Jersey. Our percentages are very, very high. We sort of--

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Wait a minute. Something happened here. What happened with that microphone?

MS. CLANTON: That's me. I always break the mike. (problem with microphone rectified) Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Oh, that's better.

MS. CLANTON: As I was saying, South Jersey sort of gets left out. Our percentages are so very, very high here, and they continue to be. We started out at the YWCA in Atlantic City back in the early 1970s, and we did a welfare reform program called "Moms and Tots." At that time, we addressed school dropouts who had babies. We did a program with them to bring their children, to educate them, to get a GED, to get them back into school. However, the YWCA, just as the YMCA, failed because -- young people can't vote maybe. I don't know the reason, but we have to take another look at why our programs that address adolescents are not as important.

But we come on up to the present day, and we are talking about new attitudes. Recently, we have done a program that worked with the REACH program. It is called "New Attitudes." It was a special five-part program that we designed -- in fact, that I designed -- for pregnant teens, teen parents, and young adults. We patterned it after the soap operas. We talked about health care, STDs, AIDS, and substance abuse.

Preventive health care is one of the main things that the Family Planning Programs do, and this is a part of our program -- preventive health care. We feel that talking about preventive health care, getting people involved in their health, raises their self-esteem, and there is not enough of that done.

They are referred to us for family planning once they have had their babies, but the follow-up through the system is not enough. We talk to them about parenting. Parenting is one of the new issues we are doing in family planning. The reason we are doing parenting is because preventive health care involves the entire family. When we don't address these issues, then that becomes a problem. We have tried to include the male component. It takes two people, and the males are at least half of the problem, if not more. They are left out of

the situation. As Mr. Bryant said before, the man is there, but is sometimes taken out of the home. Every child deserves a father.

It takes more than money to do some of the programs that are very, very necessary. I feel that our schools should be very essential in working hand in hand with the Department of Welfare; that they should work to give people an opportunity to be responsible. You cannot just say that to them: "Be responsible." You have to give them this opportunity. There has to be follow-up.

I remember years ago when people were welfare recipients that the caseworkers came to the homes and looked around to establish eligibility. After that, they kept coming periodically. I understand the situation where it mentions invasion of privacy, but if we are to help these people, we have to get into their privacy. We have to go into their homes. We have to get into their values. We have to give them everything it takes for them to be well-rounded persons. Just handing them a check every month is not the answer.

We need to use follow-up, and the follow-up has to be very, very important, to the point where it gets documented. Evaluation of programs that are done is something that is very, very important. If we don't evaluate the program, we don't even want to know how good it worked. Sometimes programs are funded. The funding goes to presenting a big office, getting the executive director, finding out the needs. I think we have researched needs enough. The needs are there. Everybody knows the needs, but the point now is, let's do something about them.

I have a special feeling about this because I work hand in hand. As a community health educator, I don't just write programs; I do hands on. I feel that that is the only way we are going to be able to do anything about these programs; to do hands on and be there. We have to go into the housing developments. We have to employ people who have the

feelings and the caring to deal with these people. We have to deal with cultures, and this involves training. You cannot send a young person right out of college into a blighted area and say, "Hey, go out there and do something about it." They have to know what they are doing; what they are coming in contact with. This training is very, very important.

Nobody wants to be poor. That is number one. People who have problems don't want to keep telling their problems. I find that poor people have much more pride than we give them credit for having, and respect for themselves. Everybody is not a person who is a delinquent. We have very good mothers and families in housing developments in areas that you probably, hopefully, will hear about later, but these people don't want to be poor, and they do want help. But they can't keep repeating this to the same persons.

What we need to do is find a good referral system that works. Get people's names. Refer them to people who they can ask for, who will say, "Yes, I expected you to come," and treat them with some kind of dignity. To gain respect for them, we have to give it to them. A lot of our people, especially our young parents, don't have it because they weren't born with it. It is going to get worse, because our parents are getting younger. I said I have been out here for 40 years, and I know exactly what I am talking about. We have to give it to them. They have lost it. If we don't pick it up soon, we are going to be a lost nation. It does not only involve the people who live in the housing developments. It involves all of us.

So, it is time that we thought about, or did something about where our tax dollars are going. It is okay to say no, but just saying no is not enough. If the counseling is not there and the follow-up is not there, then the programs are lost and the money is being thrown down the drain.

Assemblyman Bryant, if I can in any way be of service, I am here to help with the program I have. I wrote my program.

One other thing I want to say is, Atlantic City-- Atlantic County is so very, very political and territorial. I guess I can say that word, because everybody feels like, "This is my territory, and this is mine, and I've got my little stuff over here and I am not going to share it." Well, none of this belongs to anybody. It belongs to all of us, because when one person fails, all of us fail. When one person is not healthy, with contagious diseases or AIDS or whatever, all of us are able to get it, so we have to stop this. If we can't stand together as a group, then we are a lost nation.

Well, Toni is here. She is my sidekick. Do you want to talk about-- We are trying to do a new outreach program, so I am going to let--

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Before we do that-- Everything you said, of course, is very interesting and, as a matter of fact, something that should be given a lot of attention under this program that the Majority Leader is introducing. The truth of the matter is, even if this should pass, it is going to take people like you to watch it and to make sure that some of these things that you are suggesting take place, result, and follow-up from this legislation. So the fact that the legislation is introduced and passed is not the beginning or the end of it. It is going to take people like you, with the experience you have had, with the interest you have, to watch it, to become a part of it, to develop it, to refine it, and to make sure it is workable.

The thing you said-- One of the things you said, of course, interested me tremendously. In the families in this program, the welfare worker, the caseworker, has to look for leadership in that family. There is someone in that family. It may not be the mother, for the moment. There may be someone in that family who has real leadership ability, who has to be weeded out, and the caseworker has to make sure that that is developed; that that is encouraged. As a matter of fact,

everything should be done to develop that. That can only be done, as you said, by meaningful home visits, by observation and interest. I agree, too, with you about the fact that a person walks in with a college degree, and he is not going to solve all of those problems. It is going to take people who are a part of that, who have the affinity, the experience to deal with that. That mix with the caseworker is very, very important to tie in all of these agencies that the Majority Leader wants tied into the program.

I just hope that people like you will multiply -- if you will excuse the expression -- and watch this program and become a part of it, if this program is going to be successful. I just want to encourage you to keep doing what you're doing. As a matter of fact, even--

MS. CLANTON: It's not easy, really.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: I know it isn't; I know it isn't. As a matter of fact, I know the sense of defeat that you must have on any number of occasions and the frustrations--

MS. CLANTON: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: --and even the anger.

MS. CLANTON: I'm angry; I am angry.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: But, in any event, you have been very helpful.

Now, may we hear from your associate, please?

ANTONIA WILLIAMS: My name is Antonia Williams. I am the community outreach worker with Family Planning now. Recently we have been getting funding for a program. We will be working with adolescent high school dropouts. We are going to go into the community and locate the high school dropouts, and basically connect them with different services that are available to them in the community.

One of the problems that has been found with these adolescents is that even though the services are available to them, they may not know of the services that are available. In

trying to put the program together, and also in talking with several people, there seems to be a lack of coordination between the agencies that are helping them. Some of the agencies are repeating and doing the same services. They are not really working with one another. I think that is something that really needs to be worked on in the community -- within every community -- the coordination of services and more networking taking place, you know, rather than people being so defensive of their territories and what they are doing, but to concentrate more on the effort of helping the people whom we have the goal to help.

The other thing I have noticed-- I was working as a counselor at Family Planning. Basically, by the time these people reach adolescence, or even older than that, their attitudes are set. We need to concentrate more on the preventative measures, you know, on forming their attitudes, even as they are reaching preschool and kindergarten, to show them that they do not have to follow the patterns that they see in their communities -- becoming drug dealers and welfare mothers and things like that. They need to know even as they enter school that they can graduate, with success; that there is more for them. Basically what I know is that what you see before you and what you hear constantly is what is implanted in your mind. If we can implant in their minds, on a daily basis, that they can have better in life and that they can reach the top, then I think we will find that we will have more people, or more children working to achieve that goal. If someone mentions to them, at least daily, weekly, day in day out that they can better themselves, I think we will find that that is what will begin to happen.

It may not work for everyone, but if we can reach even 1 out of 10 with that, then we've reached that 1 out of 10.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Ms. Clanton, I understand that you have other people that you want to call on. Is that correct? (negative response) No, it's not.

I just want to ask the Majority Leader-- He, undoubtedly, has some questions that he would like to ask you, probably, or even develop some of the themes that you have asked.

Majority Leader?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me thank both of you for your testimony. And, what we are-- Our goal is to coordinate services. One of the goals under the program is to also put responsibility on government two ways.

Number one: You mentioned training. In other words, those individuals who are to provide services need to be trained to give a fair opportunity. You mentioned the coordination of services, and that's why we go for individual family plans. In other words, there's no reason for us in State government to be spending \$5 billion and not have those services that are available brought to the attention of people, and made sure that they are applied in the plan.

I mean, what dawned on me when we were creating this -- and I had discussions with your legislator here, Fred Scerni, about some of the problems we've both experienced as we were discussing this, and that's why I'm so glad Fred became part of this program-- We were talking about-- It seemed to be incredulous that both of us were used in our offices to help people find programs that were available. I consider myself halfway bright, and it was taking me two days to figure out the State system, or the county system, or the local system of how to get a person to a program. I'm saying if these programs were designed to help people, why shouldn't, when they come in for help, we provide a network to provide them to understand where the programs are to help them?

So that is one of the major goals of the program; that they should not have to search out and seek. It should be our responsibility.

And we should be evaluated in government. Did we bring about the coordination of all the services that are available to help those families, and develop a plan to take them out of poverty? So, we are trying to attempt in this legislation to do exactly what it is that both of you have called for. We believe that people, like you say, don't want to be in poverty. Nobody wants to live in poverty. What happens is, do we really give them an opportunity to get out, and do we really coordinate the services?

Getting to your attitude -- and it's not really a question-- Fred brought this to mind. We did all this stuff with education, especially in our urban areas. Wouldn't it be a dream to reeducate parents who are undereducated at the same time we're educating their kids? Wouldn't we start to deal with the family holistically? That is part of why we looked at the Education Department, of doing the educational component. So, by having discussions with people like Fred and other members that have joined with me-- I can't take full credit for all of these ideas -- the ideas I got from community people and other ideas that I got from very concerned legislators. They're saying, "I refuse to allow a population within my community just to die and wither because they don't have real opportunities."

So, as you read the six-bill package, you will start to see that intertwining of making sure those same points that you've asked for have tried to be inculcated in the package. So, if you see some weaknesses where we left them out, let us know. We want to strengthen them.

I can't take all the credit. I want to thank the Chairman. As you can see, he's been a very big help in this and especially Fred Scerni, who has dialogued with me in terms of thinking about some of these ideas.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Thank you very much.

Assemblyman Scerni.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCERNI: If I can, just one quick question, because, Mrs. Clanton, something you said really caught my attention.

In your testimony you made the statement, "Just handing them a check every month is not the answer." I think that's a very telling observation. Is that an attitude that is held by many people with whom you come in contact, Because I think that really begins to open the door.

MS. CLANTON: Are you saying, like, what do they do with the money?

ASSEMBLYMAN SCERNI: No, no, no. I think when you were evaluating existing programs, you made the observation that just handing out the check is not enough.

MS. CLANTON: Oh, right. Okay. What I meant by that was that you give them the check. So the check needs to last a whole month, or 30 days from one first of the month to the next. They need to be taught. People don't know-- Most of the young people that are getting pregnant today, that are receiving welfare, don't even know what a dollar is worth. They don't know how to spend money. They know what they want, so they buy what they want and they can beg what they need, but the point is, that they have to be taught how to value money; how to stretch a dollar; how to budget their money; how to be able to buy food that lasts from one payday to the next.

It needs a whole lot, and we do part of that in working with some of them. The housing development does beautiful work with the people that live in the area, but this has to be taught, and, like I said, the ages are getting younger and younger, and they know less because they haven't been taught. It's important that this part happens, and I don't think that we should wait until they become a statistic. See, my staunch belief is on preventative health care -- prevention of all of these problems -- and we need to put a little more money in that area. The preventive part would

teach them, early on, how to value the money. This is where -- in the schools -- maybe home economics classes should become a little more involved in the parenting portion of it. I find that young men do not know anything about their health because they haven't been taught, and so, the Department of Education needs to restructure their family life education program.

I had an opportunity to work this summer with some of the teachers who were preparing a new curriculum for the Atlantic City schools, and when I looked over what they were teaching and how long it took them to get around to talking about human growth and development, and STDs, I was surprised. See, we're really selling these young people short about the things that they need to know early on. Like I said, I'm a real believer that good health care, and teaching good health care and learning how to use good hygiene, is a step towards self-esteem -- and you can start it in preschool.

See, these are the things that we really need to preach, and to do. And parents-- I encourage parents to come out to see what's going on in their schools because, see, parents don't really realize how much authority or how much clout they have, and they need to get out there. We need to take a good look at our school boards and what are their answers.

You know, we need to ask these questions. You see, we vote these people in and then we sit back and say, "Well, they're there." But I don't feel like that. I'm sorry, and all of you who are elected people, you know, you might be hearing from me, because I never was political because I didn't have time. I'm always doing my job because I needed to do it. But now we need to think more about: Are you doing it?

I commend Assemblyman Bryant. I think this is a beautiful step, and if we don't take advantage of it now, we may lose the vote down here in South Jersey.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Thank you very, very-- Just this: You've been very, very helpful, and as a matter of fact, it was very refreshing to hear from you. I think that all of us would want to encourage you to do what you're doing, and to do more of it. Thank you very, very much.

MS. CLANTON: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: I understand that the Assemblyman wants to make a statement?

ASSEMBLYMAN SCERNI: If I may? Mr. Chairman, Mr. Majority Leader, as we hear this testimony it becomes apparent that the ultimate solution comes from a blend of activity at all levels of government, not only the State government and the county government, but also the municipal.

And in that regard, I would just like to take a moment to recognize the presence of Atlantic City Councilman John Kelley who has shared his time, and has come here today. John, thank you for being with us. (applause)

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Excuse me. Excuse me. I would want to extend the opportunity for you to testify if you have something to say, Councilman. Do you? Do you want to come up here, please?

C O U N C I L M A N J O H N C. K E L L E Y: The only thing-- I didn't come prepared to testify.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: That's probably the best testimony; when you're not prepared.

COUNCILMAN KELLEY: I know, but I've followed Assemblyman Bryant's bill very closely. He's definitely on the right track. We need the new and innovative steps that are in that bill, and I think that he stepped out there into a -- probably a political quagmire, when he did it. But I know Assemblyman Bryant, and he has the guts and the moxie in what he believes is right. You're definitely on the right track, Assemblyman, and I'm wholeheartedly in support of the legislation.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Thank you very, very much.
Thank you.

Just before I call on the next person, I just want to make an announcement that anybody that has written statements, you know you can also submit those written statements. I just want to introduce two people so that you'll know with whom you're dealing. If you have anything in writing that you want to submit, you just submit it to David Price, who is from Legislative Services. And that address, if you miss him, is the Office of Legislative Services in Trenton. And then, Kelly Ganges, who has been a very, very important part of this Committee, and as a matter of fact, telling us all what to do and how to do it. Kelly Ganges, he's the other person that you'll want to be talking to, and I just wanted to identify them. And of course, the fifth wheel that's here is my aide, Kenny Friedman. Kenny, would you-- Kenny's sitting on the end there. So you can take advantage of these people. They're here for that purpose, and I just wanted to introduce them.

Now, may we hear from Gilbert Gillette? Am I pronouncing that correctly? Gilbert, tell us who you're representing and identify yourself for the record, would you please?

G I L B E R T A. G I L L E T T E: My name is Gilbert Gillette. I'm representing myself, and as someone who recently came off assistance and conquering certain situations, I'm not asking for any particular help. But I thought maybe you could take a look at it for the next person down the road, and that is: I was on public assistance while I was here, and before I was here, and it covered a lot of medical expenses that I have, like regarding my teeth and certain physical therapy and other treatments that I received.

I got a job. I started working because I didn't want to stay on public assistance all my life, and I find that I'm

no longer covered for any sort of medical stuff. Now, I can afford to pay my rent, and food, and clothing, and that sort of stuff, but I can't afford to pay for these medical treatments, and they tell me I'm not eligible for Medicaid or any assistance to cover my medication or my medical bills. But actually, it covers my medication. I can get all the medication in the world, but I don't have the machine to administer it with, so it's like, worthless. I'm sure other people are encountering the same problem, and if you people are looking to help, or to come up with some sort of plan-- Because I don't want money; I don't want any food stamps, but I cannot afford to pay for my medical. I'm sure this happens with a lot of us, and it's just something for you all to take a look at. When I heard this hearing was taking place, I took off work for an hour just to come down and share that with you all. Now I've got to go back to work.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: All right. Thank you very, very much.

MR. GILLETTE: Have a nice day, gentlemen.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Thank you.

May we have Meg Worthington, the President of Worthington Associates? She's a board member of the Institute here.

M E G W O R T H I N G T O N: Thank you for coming to the Institute.

Good morning, Mr. Chairman. I have a prepared statement. It's very short.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Well, if it's short--

MS. WORTHINGTON: Yes, it is.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: --please read it.

MS. WORTHINGTON: Thank you for the opportunity, though, for letting me speak this morning -- I appreciate it -- with you and the other Committee members about this very critical issue which we feel very deeply here at the Institute.

From my perspective, as one who's spent several years as a Mayor and Councilperson, and on the Board at this Institute, and from my conversations with other people and other municipalities, I'm fully aware of the tremendous burden which our welfare system places on government, mostly in the area of dependency.

You don't have to be part of the public sector to know just how serious the problems are with our welfare system.

Mr. Chairman, we sit here today in a drug rehabilitation center. All of us in this room know of the dangers of drugs. We all know that drugs can only lead to dead ends. And I daresay that it's unlikely that any of us would ever condone a program that breeds dependency.

Let's stop a moment and place our welfare system in the same context. As presently constructed, our welfare system does breed dependency that we're facing here on a day-to-day basis -- a dependency on a check which arrives once a month; a dependency -- like drugs -- also leads to dead ends.

For many of our welfare recipients, there's little hope of escape from this impoverishment in the neighborhoods, the drugs, and crime. Many have no reading and writing abilities, no job skills, or stable family life.

I would just like to commend Assemblyman Bryant, Assemblyman Scerni. I'll give you the rest of my testimony. I'll submit it here in writing.

It's just that I think that you've taken tremendous strides to break the chain of dependency. And I want to support what John Brooks has said about the issue of dependency and the necessity for treatment and follow-up on a stable family system. We believe -- the Institute Board believes -- that that aspect should be considered very strongly.

Thank you for your time.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Would you just stay put, please? Just stay put for a minute. How many copies of that do you have? Do you just have the single--

MS. WORTHINGTON: Just one. You can have it.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Will you make sure that we get that single copy, please?

MS. WORTHINGTON: Yes, I'll give it to him.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Yeah. In addition to that, I know something about your background, and as a matter of fact, I know of your interest in this subject. I just hope, of course, that you'll stay with this and maintain your interest. I don't know if the Assemblyman here has any questions that he would want to ask you?

ASSEMBLYMAN SCERNI: Nothing specific. I just appreciate the time that Meg came to be with us today.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Yeah. The Majority Leader may want to make a comment.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: First, I'd like to welcome Meg, and I want to tell you that your analogy between the two dependencies is something people ought to draw in on, because there really is a real analogy in terms of whether we're giving people an opportunity -- whether drugs, as we know it, or in welfare -- and that dependency needs to be broken in terms of allowing people to be responsible.

I want you to know I'm probably going to steal some of what you said, to drive home the fact about how those analogies really are real in America, and maybe that might help people to focus on why it's important why we're doing what we're doing. I appreciate that, so if you hear it somewhere else said in context, and I don't give you credit for it, it's not because I'm trying to steal it, but I'm letting you know up front, so all of the press knows that you brought it to my attention first. But that analogy, I think, is really crucial in terms of us really grappling with what it is that we're doing with the permanent underclass we've created in America.

MS. WORTHINGTON: Listen, Wayne, just one other point. Your recognition -- and this Committee's recognition --

of the need to strengthen the family unit is really critical. It's just--

I hear from inner-city school teachers all the time, and it's not like when we all went to school; it's a lot different. Kids are so young -- five years old -- and they're, you know, being watched by somebody who's seven years old, and left alone because their families are out, sometimes in the drug-vicious cycle, and other times of having to work for a living, just to make ends meet. But I think the most critical things that you've hit on in this issue are the need to strengthen the family values, and the need to provide people with the education or see that they get it. I think just to add to that, the issue of making sure that we break the dependency of drugs, because it takes more than an education and money to do that. It takes a commitment by the system to make sure that people aren't taking the money and using it for drugs. And I think that's a lot of the thrust of what John has said -- what our Board has believed. I'll submit this to somebody here.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: May we have that, please?

We're going to take a five-minute break -- just a five-minute break to let everybody stretch for a minute.

(RECESS)

AFTER RECESS:

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: May we come to order, please? May we come to order, please?

If anyone hasn't submitted their name, and they want to testify, the slips are over here. Make sure you fill them out and turn them over to David, here. All right?

Now we're going to call on the Reverend Holly Hughes of the Calvary United Methodist Church of Atlantic City. Is he

here? (aide informs Chairman) Oh, she. Holly.

R E V E R E N D H O L L Y H U G H E S: Just for the record I would like to introduce myself again. My name is Reverend Holly Hughes, and I'm the Pastor of Calvary United Methodist Church which is just a stone's throw from here -- about a block, here on Pacific Avenue. And also, our facility houses North Star, which is a drug program based at Atlantic Mental Health dealing with pregnant women who are drug-addicted. It's a national pilot project, and it is going to be astounding -- some of the observations coming from this pilot project.

I'd simply like to take the time to refer to the titles that's being given this reform act. It's entitled the "Family Development Act," and immediately our interest is focused on something that's significant and the most important community that any of us will ever live among, and that is our family. Yet I'd like for those here today to look at the word "development" and to understand its meaning for us. To develop carries promise of growth or evolution into something complete even in complexity. Therefore, placing the word "development" after the word "family," we are encouraged, today, to assume that these reforms suggest that it's appropriate for the family to grow or to evolve into something complete, yet complex. If several junctures of this reform were taken seriously, then my fear is, the last thing the family will do is to develop into a complete picture.

I ask you the question: What's wrong with this picture? When, on one hand, in a very positive way, welfare recipients are committed to marry working spouses provided under specific circumstances without the stigma of penalty -- all in the name of family, which we would all agree is most important -- yet when children are involved, and many times in the context of marriage you'll find that children do become a part of the picture, no matter how many children one might have before the marriage-- Marriage seems to be a stable

environment for adding children. It is suggested that only particular, timely born children are to be valued enough to financially support. If you will, it's as if a price tag of \$60-odd was placed on the head of a child at one point, and then this new reform comes along and places a reduced tag on it which reads, "Not one penny, because you are not wanted by our overcrowded system." What's wrong when the children are, once again, the victims of another reform? And we are so capable of deciding the value of family members and a quota of family members in terms of financial budget according to A-4703. I ask again, what's wrong with this picture when a reform uses the withholding of money as a form of burden manipulation and has no problem deciding who is timely born into this chaotic world?

For some welfare recipients, the only freedom they have left is the ability to have a family. And even though we might say there are a million reasons not to bring a child into this system, there is, perhaps, a greater need to surround oneself with the most precious privilege; that of family, despite poverty. I do not believe children are only for privileged and the upwardly mobile -- those who think they know their own stable destinies.

Reform A-4703 is based upon a stereotype that harms us all. It implies particularly that female welfare recipients desire to stay on welfare all their life and continue to create children so that the State owes them something.

Well, I'm not here to say that that is not true, because we do have those cases. But here we're not only blaming the recipient for being poor, but the reform also would like to blame one for wanting children. Who would go through the intensity of pregnancy, birth, and child rearing for a mere \$60 a month? And yes, some people would answer yes to that. But this stereotype is dehumanizing to those women and men who have few choices left within the system. This reform is

initiated to deter birth, and I've talked to many people who said, "Yes, don't you think that would be a good deterrent?" But the reality is that children are born, and if children are born under this reform, they're there. And it's no longer a privileged discussion that we have here today among ourselves, or, "How the welfare system can deter growing families." The child exists, yet without provisions that the parents, themselves, cannot afford. Are we to lecture on the imprudence of the parents earning the \$60-some-odd a month to take care of that child? Meanwhile, the child is growing up without the very things all children deserve. Surely no one is recommending irresponsible procreation, but in those instances, are we going to punish the child for its life -- for being untimely born according to this reform package?

I must ask you specific questions in reference to even the promise of childcare vouchers. Some of these statements were very ambiguous or vague. For instance, how much is that voucher worth? How long will it exist for that child; to what age? How much time will that be given to the parent?

I ask you other questions, such as: What if parents, even in the marriage context, were responsible and had chosen to determine their own sense of family size and had chosen birth control -- and yet we all know that birth control fails -- and yet that child becomes the victim of reform? My understanding of reform is that our government provides protection for the household from practices which are unfair, dangerous, and degrading. Yet this reform does not imply that it wants the family to necessarily develop, but that this reform wants the family to merely survive in relation to children.

My recommendation is that this is what the reform is saying: that the Act be renamed the "Family Survival Act," because my greatest fear is that the family becomes the headliner for the most endangered in America.

So I ask you these questions, and if you do have responses, I would appreciate it. Thank you for the time and privilege today.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: As a matter of fact, I'm sure that the Majority Leader is sitting here with bated breath to answer that question.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Yes. Reverend, I appreciate your comments, but I respectfully disagree.

REVEREND HUGHES: I'm sure you will.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: We respectfully disagree in two areas. All those, including yourself, who tell me that we are worried about those in poverty, have been awfully silent for 40 years about a system that has systematically destroyed the family. We who live in good suburbia with our intact families, have been silent as that family has been systematically destroyed by separating the male. And yet, we talk-- We're worried about the family.

Secondly, this bill does no more than what you do and I do, that it says-- I don't believe \$64 is why a person has a child, but I do believe a person can make a responsible decision when they are an adult whether, in fact, their family wants to expand, whether they're prepared to work in addition to earn money.

Now let us go through an analysis of \$64. Right now, at the minimum wage, if a person decided to go work 15 hours a month, they would earn more than \$64. So in essence, the burden that I have relieved by having an income disregard protects even a responsible person from making that decision. It is incredulous to me that middle-class America fights for the proposition that a person should not be responsible for their decisions.

It is, secondly, not a constitutional right to welfare in this country. And, thirdly, it is incredulous to me that people today do not -- who qualify for welfare -- do not have

to come to the welfare office and place any of their children on welfare. And yet there is no-- There is an awful silence that that should be mandated. And yet as it comes to this particular bill, people argue children are the protectors only of their parents for their irresponsibility. I disregard, or think that is an obstinate way of looking at how you get people from poverty to self-sufficiency. It is built on a premise that adults, grown adults, are incapable of making rational decisions, and that, unless we take care of people from cradle to grave, they will not be able to take care of themselves.

The bill is very clear. We're not talking about the mentally handicapped. We're not talking about the physically handicapped. We're talking about able-bodied individuals, and we're trying to create a system that allows a person not to be permanently in poverty.

What you are projecting has been projected for 40 years to keep people permanently and increase the poverty system. And I challenge all to come before the table to tell me that what is today happening is not bankrupt, and is pushing people further into poverty.

Thirdly, it is a lie to the poor -- and America -- to say that you're going to provide enough income for a person to be nonproductive and nonresponsible, and be paid by America to be out of poverty. We need to stop and break that link. That is a lie to those who are in; they are sliding further into poverty and we're paying less, because people understand that unless you're productive in this society and responsible that you will not fare well in America. And we need to start to develop systems in the poverty system that will reflect where you want them to be -- not less reflect. And to say that we're going to have this overall protection system that you will live in and yet we want you to get to a system-- It's interesting how we call these systems of penalties, unless you call the system of America a system of penalty.

You go to work every day. If you don't go to work -- even as a minister -- you don't get paid. Is that a penalty or a system of responsibility? If you come consistently late to work, is that a penalty or is that a responsibility? Then why, in the welfare system, can't there be a system of equal responsibility? That is the challenge.

REVEREND HUGHES: I've got two things to say: First, I would like to commend the reform that does, in fact, instill a family stability, that of having a man in the household through the marriage context. That I affirm, absolutely. But the reality of it is that once you have a stable relationship between a man and woman, a result of that, many times, is more children.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Fine. I don't doubt that. I have no problem with that.

REVEREND HUGHES: But that's not fine when, yes, they have a child and perhaps it was an intentional birth -- sometimes it's not intentional even though the parents were responsible, but those--

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Happens to you and I every day.

REVEREND HUGHES: Okay. But the reality is, those children-- Yes, they will become the victims, because what money was received for that family will be stretched to feed the mouths then, of four, as opposed to three.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: You make a basic assumption that people will not do what is in their best interests. In other words, you're making the basic assumption-- You're really talking about if a child is not even in existence. So, number one is-- One of the flaws in the argument is that we're really talking about planning for something that's not there, because this package has nothing to do with the size of families. In other words, you can come into this system with 10 kids, and it will take care of it.

REVEREND HUGHES: But if you add an eleventh child, that child--

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: But you make the basic assumption that people will not be responsible enough to do what is in their best interest for their family. In other words, if you see a sign at McDonalds's and it says, "Help wanted on a part-time basis," you'll make the assumption that if I have an additional child that I would not go and take that part-time job in order to do better, if the system allowed me to produce income. That's what you're making, an assumption. I don't make that assumption. I consider it's faulty.

REVEREND HUGHES: No, I'm not making the assumption that someone cannot choose responsibly. I think the assumption being made is that it is only responsible not to have a child.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: No, I'm not making that assumption. I'm saying that you-- Just as you, and I do in my family situation -- and any person that is in a working-class family -- you make a consideration upon having a child. And one of those--

REVEREND HUGHES: But isn't that a privilege of the class that we stand in? Isn't that a privilege?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: No.

REVEREND HUGHES: And yet there's a gap-- There's a gaping gap that there is no bridge to, and I feel like that this reform is saying, "Yes, this is the bridge. We're going to instill middle-class values." And I've heard this term over and over and over, and I'd like for someone to really define that. You know middle class is a mentality some of us have been born into; not by any merit of our own, it was an accident of birth. But the reality is those children, though not existent today, will exist tomorrow, and by accident of birth they will be penalized by withholding the funds.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: They're not penalized. Do you believe that for a person it is against a person's dignity to

go work for 15 hours a month at McDonald's in order to support one of their children?

REVEREND HUGHES: Absolutely not, but when they're already holding two jobs, how can they do that?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: They're not on the welfare system.

REVEREND HUGHES: Well, I have a-- For instance, Robin is a child that plays in our recreation camp that we have at our church down the block, and Robin's father-- I met him the other day, and he has eight children. He is a single-parent household. His youngest child is almost newly born. The mother had abandoned the family.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Right.

REVEREND HUGHES: And yet the reality is, this man is holding down three jobs already.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Yeah, but he's not capable-- He's going to have another child?

REVEREND HUGHES: The reality is-- What if the wife does come back and they have another child under this reform? What would happen to that child?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Then she can go to work, too. She can add to the household income. She can go and get that job. That's all I'm saying. That is all-- What I do is, I go work overtime. I go get another job. I do a lot of things.

REVEREND HUGHES: But see, that also is a privilege of the middle-class mind-set.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: It's not a privilege; it is what America is founded upon, unless you believe you need to have a permanent underclass. If that is your belief, then that's where we separate, and I separate from both. I believe welfare is a transitional system and should be -- and designed that way -- not a permanent underclass system. You are talking about a 1960 permanent underclass system that has only broadened the base of folks not understanding that you want to get them to a system where, in fact, those decisions -- what I call

self-sufficiency -- that is, responsibility to make a decision, recognize all of the factors that make up a family-- That is not one of privilege. That is one every blue-collar, white-collar, and professional person makes every day.

REVEREND HUGHES: Okay, I'd like to ask some concrete questions now. Even in reference to-- I believe one of the gentlemen did mention that if a child is born under this reform, say this A-4703 is adopted, and say there is a child that is born without benefits necessary moneywise, will there be medical care provided for that child?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Yes, there will be.

REVEREND HUGHES: Okay, that is a very positive thing. Another thing is: Have you given any thought to, for instance, the length of time that this child care will be available?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Yes. Twenty-four months.

REVEREND HUGHES: So that makes the child two years old. After that, do you feel that the child can be left and the mother can work? Is that what you're saying? Or the father?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: What I'm saying is, we want to give people a hand as they get into the work force. Whether, in fact-- Unless we're going to promise, in America, everybody's going to get free child care -- and we're not at that stage -- all we can do is get folks to the position and to help them through their transition to self-sufficiency. That's all you can do.

REVEREND HUGHES: Well, I appreciate your time. I know this has been a heated discussion of the other public hearings, but I do appreciate your time.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: I appreciate your comments, too.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Pastor, thank you, very, very much.

May we go to the next person who is Effie Jenkins, the Director of Alternative and Community Education. Effie, where are you? Effie, I just want to make this announcement, too. Janie Jones, because of a family obligation cannot be here to testify, but for the record she wants to indicate that she's interested in the subject and, as a matter of fact, regrets that she couldn't be here to testify personally.

Yes, Effie. Would you identify yourself, please?

E F F I E J E N K I N S - S M I T H: Effie Jenkins-Smith, from Pleasantville public schools. I'm Director of Alternative and Community Education there. And I'm glad to see that you have decided to come to South Jersey, because we usually have to travel to North Jersey in order to give input and attend conferences and meetings of importance.

The main reason I'm here is because we have a program in Pleasantville that we consider an exemplary program throughout the State. What we do is, we deal with the prenatal care of adolescents who are in school. We take them out; we give them their academic subjects; and we also give them childbirth ed. We take them to the hospitals; they have nutrition classes; and we follow them all the way through their pregnancies. We've had successful pregnancies, 5.5 and above. But what happens is, 90% of the girls who are involved in our program do go on welfare, because they need that additional assistance.

When they finish our program and they return to the high school, we have also found that these girls start falling behind because they don't have those additional support services in the high school setting also. And yes, they're still on welfare, getting additional assistance. So we see a need there, that maybe welfare can possibly funnel some moneys through and it could be to the school system. I receive moneys through JTPA for employment skills that I teach to my Alternative students. I could also see moneys being funded for

students who happen to be on welfare who may need additional family life education, or having the health educator come in, and all those additional services that may not be provided right now.

That's the basis that I wanted to speak about, in terms of our Alternative program. I'm glad to see that the bill focuses on family development so that it encompasses everybody, not just the one person, because we see the girls as they make their decision to go on welfare, and we sit down with them and help them make a decision: "Yes, you do need welfare; no, you don't." And we would like to have some alternatives for these girls so we can say, "Yes, you need it, but here are the steps that you can use, or do, in order to plan your life so that welfare is not a long-term situation. It's a short term to get over your crisis, get out, and get back on your feet again. If your family cannot help you or support you, here are the systems that can." For those families that can help them, we need another type of support system for them also, because their income guideline will cause them not to be able to be eligible for welfare, but yet they wind up falling into a bracket of at risk and maybe dropping out of school, because they have to go to work and then eventually they will get on welfare because they still need the help.

So, those are the areas that I'd like to see you include, if you can. The family life program for New Jersey, in my opinion, right now is very arbitrary, and school districts implement family life however their boards want them to. Some people teach it; some people don't. We need to have health educators come in and start dealing with that in a more real way -- realistic way -- dealing with the issues, as Ms. Clanton brought out, and also funding those. Maybe they can come through the welfare department where a health educator is assigned to at-risk students or to these young mothers and fathers who are on welfare so that they are getting that kind

of education and not getting it secondhand and repeating the same cycle.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Is that a written statement that you have there? Is that a written--

MS. JENKINS-SMITH: No, it's not.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: It is not.

MS. JENKINS-SMITH: No.

One other thing that we do have, too, is a mentoring program that was brought out in the Governor's Task Force -- I believe it was in 1988 -- and we've established that with the Business and Professional Womens' Organization to give the girls some kind of connection with people in the community that they can call or just say, "Hi, hello. How are you? Do you have any problems?" -- a friend. And these older women meet with the girls just to give them assistance, and that has worked out pretty good, also. What we've found, though-- One of the major network televisions came down and they said, "Oh, this is a wonderful program." But we found that we did not have a follow-up in terms of successful girls, maybe five years later. Maybe the girls had babies again, or the girls were on welfare, or they didn't have-- Maybe they were working at a local fast-food place and they did not have a stable career that they could highlight. We felt pretty bad about that, so that's why the follow-up for these girls is very important.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: But I think that's what this legislation is all about. Thank you very, very much.

Now may we hear from Donna Bassasno? Donna, are you here? Bassasno? (no response) She's not here.

All right, may be hear from Susan King? Susan?

S U S A N K I N G: Good morning. My name is Sue King, and I'm the Operations Manager at Eastern Service Workers Association in Atlantic County. I'm here today as a spokesperson for the Atlantic County Workers Benefit Council, and other similar councils in Mercer and Middlesex Counties,

representing a combined total membership throughout New Jersey of over 20,000 low-income workers, who asked me to state our absolute opposition to these Assembly bills before the Health and Human Services Committee today.

We're asking the State to take a ways and means approach to the absolute abolition of poverty in this State. These bills retain the workfare component of the REACH program, which is destructive to industry, to jobs, livelihoods, and the entire State economy, and for welfare recipients, themselves: welfare means slavery.

The bills at issue correctly acknowledge several shortcomings in the current REACH program formulation, which would purport to reform that program, but these reforms have entirely missed the primary and most destructive defect of the current REACH program, leaving its most deleterious elements untouched. It is the workfare component of the original REACH program which has had the most terribly destructive effects on the lives and livelihoods of thousands upon thousands of working families throughout our State, and this is the main issue which we wish to address.

In 1987, when the REACH program was first proposed, our organization spoke against it, because we knew from the horrible experiences of tens of thousands of members of organizing drives like ours in the State of California, where workfare was first implemented, what havoc this program would cause to the people of our State; not just havoc upon the lives of the poor, who were receiving AFDC, but destruction that would be visited upon the lives and livelihoods of other working people throughout the State, who would lose their jobs when their employers would be forced to compete in a market where their competition had the cost advantage of being able to employ workfare or REACH workers at a fraction of the pay scales previously paid in that industry.

But our warnings went unheeded, as though they were simply the vacant words of doomsayers. Now, four years later, I frankly wish they had been. I, so very much, wish we had been dead wrong, but, unfortunately, when we look back now on the suffering so many of our people have gone through, I realize that if anything, we were optimistic. The results have simply been horrific.

We've had cases of workers who come to our organization who have applied for jobs at casinos, and have been hired and fitted for uniforms. After the casino found out they were on welfare, they were told they would not be hired directly by the company; that they would have to go through the REACH program and would be paid up to \$3 less per hour for the labor they did.

We've had a woman come in who lost her apartment because she was participating in the baby-sitting program of the REACH program. When the program ran out of children to send her, because they didn't have enough jobs for REACH recipients and no longer had children to baby-sit, she went back and applied to get her welfare again and was told that her previous month's income was too high. She wasn't eligible for welfare that month, and she lost her apartment.

There are many other examples I could go into. For these reasons, no package of laws, no matter how presumably well-intended their proposed reforms are, could ever be supported by our organization as long as the fundamental premise of the REACH program -- the workfare component -- remained intact. REACH is workfare, and this reform version comprises all of the essential workfare elements. This is a kinder and gentler form of workfare, but we're obliged to point out that a kinder, gentler gas chamber offers very few advantages over the original version, to those who are herded inside.

There is one other specific component of these bills on which we must state our explicit exception. We are certain that the reforms proposed in several of the bills would appear to have been drafted in a good-faith attempt to correct some of the ills of the previous legislation. Assembly Bill No. 4703 is simply reprehensible.

Ladies and gentlemen, doesn't this proposal strike you as one of George Orwell's nightmares? Ladies and gentlemen, you cannot possibly believe that the people of this State would find such an act, that would effectively control the number of children a woman may bear, as punishment for her poverty, to be anything but unconscionable. And if the moral implications of such an act, the idea that the State might coerce or dictate how many children the poor may bear, is not enough to cause one to stop and think, then we believe the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution must.

This represents the most blatant violation of the First Amendment right to religious freedom, whereby women, regardless of their beliefs, religious, or moral values, would, in effect, be economically coerced to contracept or avoid pregnancies. There are further Fourteenth Amendment issues that play, as well, in the effective abridgement of the right of citizenship. The right to control or to give birth has never been, and never will be, seized upon by any government body. It is not within the constitutional prerogative of either State or Federal governments to do so. And under the Tenth Amendment, the State and Federal governments are forbade from exercising powers not expressly delegated to the government by the Constitution.

Ladies and gentlemen, neither the State of New Jersey nor the Federal Constitution grant you the right to do anything like what you're proposing. And the Constitution, certainly, does not grant the right to selectively enforce such a code in such a discriminatory fashion. No, the people of this State

will not tolerate a law that places such an unheard of burden on only those who are poor, women, and predominantly minority women.

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Thank you very, very much. Majority Leader Bryant, please?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: I think it's important that we address some of the concerns that you've raised, because it is clear to me, as you stated, you would not -- under any circumstances -- look at any program that would make people, or give people an opportunity to be competitive in this country. So, in that sense, your group advocate that there ought to be a permanent poverty class of people, and that they ought to remain in poverty because of their competition with those in the regular work force.

Secondly, we need to clear something up very clearly. The bill that deals with individuals and their choice to expand their family is not a bill that denies people to expand their family. You can say it and you can say it, but it's like they say, "You can press a truth to earth, but it will rise again." It will never be a bill that stops you from having more children, no matter how much you want to say it.

Secondly, it dawns on me that so many folks start to talk about the Constitution when they talk about this bill, and there's no constitutional right to welfare, number one. There is no obligation on the State or the Federal government to provide people with an income level. So, therefore, welfare as a concept is not constitutionally based, and we must understand that clearly, first.

To talk about it as a workfare program, I would caution your group to at least go back and analyze the bills, because they have clearly not read the bills. The bills are educationally based. For the first time, it is a program that says that education is a key to the way out, and that the

government must have a responsibility to educate you before it can train you. Major difference.

Secondly, it gives a fork in the road. It does not push everybody to training. It says that once you have at least a level of education vocationally, or high school, you have a fork in the road. We're going to find some very, very bright people. You might go to college, a county college or a four-year college. We will pay for that, too, or you will be trained -- one or the other. So you do have choices. But we do say one thing: As we are providing income, we will also make you step to the plate with some responsibility.

MS. KING: May I respond to some of your comments?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Let me finish.

That responsibility, to me, is what I think everybody in the State can buy into very easily. Number one, you must put some effort into your education, and you must attend. Now, what you've done if you decided not to do either one is very basic. You've decided that you don't want to participate in the program which is established in the State, which people can elect to do today. If they don't like what they see in welfare today, they never have to walk to the office. They never have to participate. So, in that sense, responsibility is the key mark.

Thirdly, again, and I caution you because the organizations cannot-- I've written all of these organizations and said, "Don't come and tell me what it is that -- only what you don't like. You have a responsibility to come and tell me what will work, because what is going on today is completely bankrupt, and it's misery for people, more and more people."

I think, thirdly, is that, I asked all of these concerned groups, "Where were you when they were destroying the family?"

MS. KING: Would you like a response? First of all, your initial statement that we want to promote a continued

class of poverty is totally counter to what I said. What we're calling for is an approach to the economic conditions in this State and in this country that eliminates poverty forever.

The real bottom line here is that what we're talking about is jobs that pay a living wage, and benefits that people can afford to live on. The jobs that have been made available through workfare programs, here and throughout the nation since the inception of workfare programs, have never provided that for people.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: But, read your statement. Your statement talks about how it brings a body of people in competition with a lower class working people.

MS. KING: No, sir.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: That's basically what your statement said.

MS. KING: What I said was--

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Let me finish so you'll understand me.

MS. KING: Well, I can clarify it--

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: If you read the bill-- If I'm not mistaken, the bill also calls for the private sector to do the job training, which is different than what they do in REACH. Isn't that correct?

MS. KING: Well, people can get training in the private sector through REACH, as well.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Yeah, but this mandates that that's where it's going to be. In other words, what I have recognized is that government is not a good trainer, and it ought to be the private sector because that's where the jobs are created. Do you agree that it's an educationally based program; that we mandate that you do education before you do training?

MS. KING: I saw that. I don't think that's the answer.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Is that different?

MS. KING: I don't see that as the answer, because the fact is, if employers have the opportunity to hire people through workfare programs--

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Let me ask you a question then.

MS. KING: Yes, sir?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Do you believe that the underclass that has ability and has a problem with -- let's assume -- reading, at an educational level, that education is not the key for you to be productive in this society?

MS. KING: For those who need it, it definitely is, and it should be made available. But the point is, even with that education-- We have plenty of people who are poor who are educated, and who can read and write just fine. That's not the problem for everyone.

The problem is, the jobs in the service sector in this community don't pay a living wage. Whether they're privately paid for or government paid for, they're not paying people enough to live on, on these jobs.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: So your position is this, so I understand it clearly: Until society creates jobs of the magnitude that your groups believe there ought to be in terms of what they pay, then we ought to keep the poverty system?

MS. KING: Not at all. We're calling for you to take action that would change the economics of this situation so that our people can work.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: This bill is dealing with a group of people who are in a poverty system.

MS. KING: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: What is your group telling me that we ought to do until we create these jobs?

MS. KING: Create jobs that pay a living wage.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: So, what do we do with this group? What do we do with this group that's in poverty now?

MS. KING: I'm sorry?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: What do we do until we create those jobs you're talking about? What do we do with this group? We don't educate-- We shouldn't educate them?

MS. KING: Well, why are we waiting to create the jobs?

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Are you answering me that we should not educate them?

MS. KING: No, that's not what I said.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: This bill is not about creating new jobs. This bill is about dealing with a population that is, in large part, undereducated and has little bit of training. What are you advocating that we ought to do with that group until your -- if you want to call it -- utopia of the jobs that you think need to be created, ought to be created? What shall we do?

MS. KING: I don't think it's utopian to call for jobs that allow someone to pay rent, and pay for the things that they need to buy.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Excuse me?

MS. KING: I don't care what kind of work people do.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: May I just say this?

MS. KING: I don't care if they clean rooms at a hotel, they still have to have enough money coming in to pay their bills--

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: I think that--

MS. KING: --and cleaning rooms in a hotel is very much a part of what has to go on in this community if this industry is going to survive.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Ma'am, excuse me?

MS. KING: There's no indignity in that work. There's nothing wrong with that work, and workers doing that kind of work should be paid a living wage.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Excuse me, I just want to call your attention to one thing, please? Excuse me.

MS. KING: Yes, sir?

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: You're talking about the economics?

MS. KING: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Excuse me. The purpose of this Committee is not to go into the economics of the nation. We're interested in a particular social problem that's a part of the present economy, and as a matter of fact, this is what the Majority Leader is trying to address.

Your position, of course, is entirely different and beyond the scope of this Committee. As a matter of fact, I'm going to terminate it at this point.

MS. KING: Well, I came here on behalf of our members who read about this bill and asked us to say these things, because--

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: All right, you made your point.

MS. KING: --they feel they don't need more handout programs from the State. They need real jobs that pay a living wage.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: All right.

MS. KING: If they get those, they'll take care of their own families. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: You've made your point. Thank you very much.

May I have Stefanie Kirby, please? Stefanie, where are you? (no response) Stefanie left? (no response) Preston Friday? Preston, would you give us your name, and identify yourself for the record, please, so we have your name and address?

P R E S T O N F R I D A Y: My name is Preston Friday. I'm a citizen of Atlantic City. I'm here representing myself, as a private citizen. I live at 101 Boardwalk, Apartment 603.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Thank you very much. You want to go on?

MR. FRIDAY: Yes.

Assemblyman Bryant, I'd like to applaud you in your approach to this issue. See, there were a couple of occasions in my life when I had to submit to the welfare system, and it was the most dehumanizing experience I've ever had. I also live within a society that uses the welfare system as a means to an end.

I've watched the welfare system, as it exists today, be abused consistently. I see the degradation that is experienced by the children of welfare mothers. I see the degradation of the parents who are recipients of welfare. It's exhibited and manifests itself in the constant substance abuse, and the prison overcrowdedness -- all in support of our welfare system.

There was a time, when I was on welfare, I applied to this city for a job. Instead of giving me-- And they had job openings. Instead of giving me a job, they put me on the workfare system. They gave me a broom to sweep the street, when they had openings in the Public Works Department. In other words, what I've come to realize, as a result of what we presently have as welfare, is that there's a segment of our society that does support poverty.

There's people within the institutions that administer the welfare system, who need their positions in order to degrade other people. I sincerely believe that there are five and six generations of welfare recipients in this country, and in the State of New Jersey. I have watched these people have children, whose children had children, and whose grandmothers were also welfare recipients, and they're still on welfare, and they fall through the system. I also watch people, on a monthly basis, collect their welfare checks and go to New York to buy dope. The children are left at home without food or clothing.

To say that what we have is working, is a fallacy. You know, we profess to live in a democratic society, but welfare is a socialistic institution. It was something that's an offshoot of the Marxist-Lenin theory. What we need to do, as a society, is generate the need to be productive members of society. Welfare does not foster that concept. It does not give a man or a woman the incentive to go out and be creative. In fact, what it does is, it affords people the luxury of being dependent.

I'm not saying that what we have is not necessary, that it doesn't serve any social good whatsoever, but it's abused far greater than it's used for any good. The thing I managed to do, as a result of my participation in the welfare system, was to support my drug habit. I didn't pay my rent. I didn't do anything. From month to month I would get my check and go buy a package and sell drugs. If I messed that package up, I knew that next month I got another check. I also had girlfriends who had children, and they were on welfare, and I would get their check to do the same things with it. And hopefully, somewhere along the line, we would make enough money to take care of the kids.

It's not a pretty picture that I paint, and I hope that the reality of what I'm saying will bear witness to what we have here in this society.

Today, I am among the working poor, and I look forward to going to work every day. I would rather work for even less than I work for today than to be on welfare again, because today I have some personal dignity, and that's what's being taken from us. I believe that the welfare system only fosters the disease of hopelessness in our society, because for myself the only thing I did on a daily basis was get high, get drunk, and curse society as a whole because no one would let me get ahead.

I accused society of having their foot on my neck while I was trying to struggle to survive, and that was a lie. You see -- the thing was -- I had lost all hope of ever being anything greater than I was. And I watch this on a daily basis with the people that I work with. A lot of the people that I work with today are on welfare, and they have no desire to be anything greater than welfare recipients. I watch their children grow up--

I spoke to a young lady one day, and I said, "You'd make a good housewife." This is a young girl, concerning her cleaning habits and cooking abilities. She said, "Oh, I'm going to get a job. I don't want to be on welfare." You see, what our society has assumed as the position of housewife is welfare recipient. That should tell us a great deal about what we're doing to our culture and to our people -- to our young people coming up today. The only thing that children are learning in school is how to con and manipulate.

To go a little bit further: One of my sisters is a welfare thief. She was on welfare in three different states and drove a Cadillac to collect her checks. So, what are we here to do today?

I speak in favor of your bill, A-4705, establishment of a Community Restoration Committee. I believe that the restoration of the community should begin with the citizens of that community. And one of the things that I see as being drastically needed in our society, in our community in particular, is treatment facilities for those mothers who fall victim to the plagues of our society, which are the drugs and the life-style that's offered through that.

On a regular basis I'm confronted with people who seek to find treatment, and no treatment facility will accept them because they don't have insurance, or they're on Medicaid, or on welfare. These people are throwaway people. Nowhere can they get the aid that they need, and nowhere is there money set aside for them to receive that treatment.

I, myself, during a period when I was unemployed and unemployable, found relief through one of our social agencies in the State, and that was the Division of Vocational Rehab. That Division has become financially default. Therefore, that door has been closed to people who can't afford treatment.

The Institution for Human Development, here, seems to be one of the few agencies within the State that affords treatment to impoverished individuals. They have a sliding scale. Other agencies have a hard-and-fast rule: If you do not have insurance, go somewhere and die. And this is what we've established within our society, with the welfare mentality. If you can't afford to pay, you can't play.

There were many days I sat home wanting to have better for myself, and I couldn't see beyond that particular moment that I was in. Today I have hope, not only for myself but for other people, because of people like yourself who are foresighted enough to introduce a bill that would allow people the right and the ability to stand up and be themselves. I would all but love to see the institution of welfare abolished in the State of New Jersey and in the United States as a whole, because it does nothing to enhance the self-worth and the self-esteem of the individual who receives it. And anyone who says that we need welfare needs to have a checkup from the neck up.

A lot of times the advocates of this program are only those who are self-seeking and trying to maintain a job. We talk about making a living wage. I agree, we all should make money to meet our needs to the degree that we don't have to worry about tomorrow. I would be first in line for that job, and I don't care if it was sweeping the streets or shoveling doggy pooh.

The fact is, we live in a society that is competitive. Each and every one of us has to work within the confines of our abilities. If we're not able to make the

moneys that we think we deserve, we should seek the opportunity to educate ourselves and move ahead. I don't think welfare, in any form, fosters that idea. I think what we need to do, as a whole, is educate our society, and particularly the children, that what we're doing is called mental castration and ethnic genocide, in support of our welfare system as it exists. We need to do things that will entice people to want to do better.

During the periods that I was ineligible for employment and was stuck on the welfare rolls, I, in fact, resigned from welfare and I fell back on some abilities that I found that I had, and that was the ability to paint. And I started my own painting business. That's how I got out of the vicious cycle of welfare and self-loathing.

I learned to be a productive member of society by my own will to live, because had I surrendered to what was being offered to me, I would still be on welfare today. I would still be shooting drugs, or better yet, I would be in prison. I do not wish that life for anyone, especially these children that are being born today.

There are mothers who are having children who can't afford to have children, who can't afford it by virtue of their emotional and mental state, but yet we encourage them to do so by giving them money to have children. I know people who want to buy a color TV, so they make a baby. What kind of sense does that make? That's what we're supporting within our society today. I see this on a regular basis.

See, I was raised in the streets of Newark. I don't know where anybody else here comes from. I also see it within the streets of Atlantic City. It's not a pretty sight.

I thank you, again, for your time.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Would you just sit there for a moment, please? Thank you very, very much.

David, you know what? For myself, what I would like when this testimony is being transcribed -- of Mr. Friday-- I

immediately want a copy of his testimony. I think some of the things that he said here today are very, very pertinent, and, as a matter of fact, very, very important to the whole concept that faces the nation.

I'm sure that when the Majority Leader approached this subject, with this legislation -- and, of course, he's not dealing with the many, many problems that you've developed here today that face human beings-- I think that your testimony is very, very important and makes a great contribution to the work of this Committee, and I'm going to ask the Majority Leader, at this moment, if he has a comment, or if he has any questions he wants to develop with you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Friday. It's been a great pleasure to listen to you. I just want to say this to you: If you came out of the streets of Newark, I would like to suggest to a lot of college kids to go into those streets to learn how to speak English as impeccably as you speak it, and as extemporaneously as you speak it. As a matter of fact, you're a lesson. You're a lesson here today in the English language. I just want to congratulate you. I think that it's startling.

For a moment, you know, I thought I was listening to that writer that just died here recently at the age of 87, who said that he didn't want to go to school because it interfered with his education, and after that, of course, he wrote a hundred books.

As a matter of fact, he just wrote his memoirs, and in his memoirs he said from 1930 -- I think -- to 1937, he read about a hundred books a year. That's Louis L'Amour. For a moment I was thinking-- I sat here and I was thinking that I was listening to Louis L'Amour, and maybe it's his ghost that came back in your person, because it was a treat, really, I mean it, to listen to you and to listen to how well you handled the language.

As a matter of fact, you must have learned something aside from the English language in your experience in life. I'm sure that the Majority Leader would want to comment.

ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT: Mr. Chairman, through you-- Mr. Friday, let me tell you that I tried to understand and put in my legislation what it is that you have expressed today, and I couldn't have expressed it better. I think you also are a testament to what I tell people constantly -- those who might fall within the traps of welfare. There's many people who are very bright, who have a lot to contribute to make our society even better, if we can get them out of hopelessness.

I think you really exemplify that. I think that there's a point that you brought up that has not really been expressed in these hearings, the whole idea of entrepreneurship. People don't focus on that part of the bill talking about community building and entrepreneurship, which you went into as a way out, which is really well embedded in our community, but it's been hidden so long that we don't look at that as a way of developing our community and a way of -- what I call -- true freedom.

I'm like the Chairman. I really do want to really review your testimony, because it really captivated, really, what it is that I'm trying to do in making sure that in this legislation we have covered those points that you've brought out so eloquently in your testimony, because that is really the voice that needs to be heard.

And you're right, those who seem to be the most detractors are those who are benefiting off of other folks' misery. And I say that quite loud and clear. Those who seem to be the biggest detractors are benefiting over other folks' misery, and I'm saying that it's time to break that and give people an opportunity to sort of have that kind of promised land that you talked about. Give them, at least, the

opportunity to have some dignity, and an opportunity to make a way for themselves in their lives, and that comes with responsibility and not dependency.

I just want to thank you for your testimony this morning.

MR. FRIDAY: Thank you for your time.

ASSEMBLYMAN OTLOWSKI: Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Friday.

Is there anybody else that wants to be heard? We're finished with the request. Is there anybody else that wants to be heard before we adjourn? (no response) If not, I just want to say this to the Majority Leader and to the staff -- I don't know this -- the Majority Leader may suggest, and I don't know, he'll probably want to think about it -- another hearing. I don't know. He'll probably want time to review it.

I think that all of us that have been a part of this have had a wonderful experience, and as a matter of fact, a wonderful education. I think that Wayne Bryant, probably unconsciously, has opened the door wide that has been shut for a long, long time. With that, I think he's opened a lot of minds with the legislation that he's proposing.

I don't think that he's saying, with this legislation, that he has all of the economic solutions of the nation; that he has all of the social solutions. I don't think that he's saying that he has all of the political solutions. I think that what he's saying here is that the welfare system has to be reviewed, has to be changed; that it's invading and destroying family life. As a matter of fact, that it's endangering the very structure of American society.

What he's saying, too, is -- I get the message from him -- the fact that there cannot be any kind of privilege. There cannot be any kind of privilege for anybody unless it's sustained by responsibility. This is what he's saying. If anything about this proposed legislation-- I've been in the

public service for almost 60 years. In that time I've practically held almost any office that you can conceive of, and I've been elected repeatedly, and I've been defeated. As a matter of fact, I came from a very, very poor family that just had to strive to stay alive, but this experience, to me, has been a wonderful, wonderful experience, and I just want to thank Wayne Bryant for the great door that he's opened up for a lot of people, just to review where we're going and how we're going about it.

But the one thing that I've learned -- the one thing that I've learned in the time that I've served as a member of the National Association of Counties -- when we tried to deal with the problem of welfare 30 years ago, and how we completely failed-- I'd like to believe, as I've indicated to you, that Wayne has opened a new door and has shown us a new horizon.

If there's nothing else, on that note I'd like to--
Excuse me. (Chairman pauses to consult with Committee staff member)

Kelly never tells me that I do anything right. He always tells me that I always leave something out. The truth of the matter is that we're very, very grateful to the people of the Institute, for making these facilities available, and for the fact that they've made us comfortable, and that they did so so graciously. Thank you very much, and thank all of you for being here.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)

REMARKS PREPARED FOR
MEG WORTHINGTON
ASSEMBLY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT -- ATLANTIC CITY
AUGUST 23, 1991

MR. CHAIRMAN, THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH YOU AND THE OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABOUT THIS VERY CRITICAL ISSUE, WHICH -- EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY -- AFFECTS EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US IN NEW JERSEY TODAY.

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE AS ONE WHO'S SPENT SEVERAL YEARS AS A MAYOR AND COUNCILWOMAN, AND FROM MY CONVERSATIONS WITH OFFICIALS FROM MUNICIPALITIES OF ALL TYPES AND SIZES, I AM FULLY AWARE OF THE TREMENDOUS BURDEN WHICH OUR WELFARE SYSTEM PLACES ON GOVERNMENT.

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE PART OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR TO KNOW JUST HOW SERIOUS THE PROBLEMS WITH OUR WELFARE SYSTEM ARE.

MR. CHAIRMAN, WE SIT HERE TODAY INSIDE A DRUG REHABILITATION CENTER. ALL OF US IN THIS ROOM KNOW THE DANGERS OF DRUGS. WE ALL KNOW THAT DRUGS CAN ONLY LEAD TO DEAD ENDS. AND I DARE SAY IT'S UNLIKELY THAT ANY OF US WOULD EVER CONDONE A PROGRAM THAT BREEDS DEPENDENCY ON DRUGS.

BUT LET'S STOP A MOMENT AND PLACE OUR WELFARE SYSTEM IN THE SAME CONTEXT. AS PRESENTLY CONSTRUCTED, OUR WELFARE SYSTEM BREEDS DEPENDENCY -- A DEPENDENCY ON A CHECK WHICH ARRIVES ONCE A MONTH, A DEPENDENCY WHICH, LIKE DRUGS, ALSO LEADS TO DEAD ENDS.

FOR MANY OF OUR WELFARE RECIPIENTS, THERE IS LITTLE HOPE OF ESCAPE FROM IMPOVERISHED NEIGHBORHOODS. MANY HAVE NO READING AND WRITING ABILITIES, NO JOB SKILLS AND NO STABLE FAMILY LIFE.

OUR CUSTOM IN THIS STATE AND THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN SIMPLY TO TOSS MONEY AT WELFARE RECIPIENTS FOR FOOD AND OTHER ESSENTIALS NEEDED FOR BASIC SURVIVAL. AS A RESULT, WE SIMPLY WRITE OFF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE AS PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SO-CALLED UNDERCLASS.

IT IS BECAUSE OF ALL THIS THAT I WAS SO EXCITED TO LEARN ABOUT WAYNE BRYANT'S AMBITIOUS PLANS TO RESTRUCTURE THE WELFARE SYSTEM THROUGH INITIATIVES WHICH STRENGTHEN FAMILY VALUES.

ARE HIS PROPOSALS CONTROVERSIAL? YES, THEY ARE.

DO THEY CALL FOR DRAMATIC AND RADICAL CHANGES? YES, THEY DO.

BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE SHOULD ASK: DO WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING NOW TO BRING THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF WELFARE DEPENDENCY UNDER CONTROL? AND AGAIN, THE ANSWER IS YES.

I BELIEVE WE NEED TO ENACT THIS PROPOSAL QUICKLY. THIS IS A PLAN WHICH WILL DRAMATICALLY CHANGE THE PROFILE OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE -- FROM A SOCIAL PROGRAM THAT BREEDS DEPENDENCY AND WEAKNESS TO A FAMILY-ORIENTED DISCIPLINE THAT PROMOTES SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

LIKE ASSEMBLYMAN BRYANT, I BELIEVE THAT WE MUST REBUILD AND STRENGTHEN THE FRAGMENTED WELFARE FAMILY. THE FAMILY INSTITUTION IS OUR BEST HOPE FOR BREAKING THE CYCLE OF POVERTY WHICH EXTENDS FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION UNDER OUR PRESENT SYSTEM.

THE PLAN BEFORE THIS COMMITTEE WOULD IMPLEMENT A NUMBER OF MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE FAMILY UNIT AND ENCOURAGE WELFARE RECIPIENTS TO BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT.

FOR EXAMPLE, EVERY FAMILY MEMBER WOULD BE UNDER CONTRACT TO OBTAIN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR ITS EQUIVALENT. A RECIPIENT WHO BREECHES THIS CONTRACT COULD LOSE UP TO 20 PERCENT IN BENEFITS.

THE LEGISLATION ALSO WOULD ALLOW FEMALE WELFARE RECIPIENTS TO MARRY WITHOUT FACING A TOTAL LOSS IN BENEFITS. HOPEFULLY, THIS WILL LEAD TO MORE FATHERS AND FATHER-FIGURES IN OUR WELFARE FAMILIES, BRINGING A SENSE OF STRENGTH AND STABILITY TO HOUSEHOLDS.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THERE ARE MANY, MANY OTHER EXAMPLES WHICH I COULD CITE. BUT I DO NOT PRETEND TO BE AN EXPERT ON THIS ISSUE. I STAND BEFORE YOU TODAY SIMPLY AS ONE WHO IS ACUTELY AWARE OF THE NEED FOR CHANGE -- A CHANGE THAT COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED BY ENACTING THE SWEEPING REFORMS CONTAINED IN THE LEGISLATION BEFORE YOU TODAY.

I KNOW YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL HEARINGS PLANNED FOR OTHER PARTS OF THE STATE. WHEN THOSE HEARINGS ARE COMPLETE, IT IS MY SINCERE HOPE THAT YOU WILL APPROVE THIS LEGISLATION SO THAT IT CAN MOVE THROUGH THE PROCESS AND BECOME LAW, MAKING NEW JERSEY A MODEL AND A NATIONAL LEADER FOR WELFARE REFORM.

THANK YOU.

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