

HB 30 -- TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE BENEFITS FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

SPONSOR: Brandom

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 7 to 4.

This bill requires the Department of Social Services to develop a program to screen and test work-eligible applicants for or work-eligible recipients of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program benefits who the department has reasonable cause to believe, based on the screening, engage in the illegal use of controlled substances. Applicants or recipients who test positive for the use of a controlled substance after an administrative hearing will be declared ineligible for TANF benefits for one year beginning on the date of the administrative hearing decision. The department will refer an individual who tests positive to a substance abuse treatment program approved by the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse within the Department of Mental Health. Any member of a household which includes a person who has been declared ineligible for TANF benefits, if otherwise eligible, will continue to receive protective or vendor payments through a third-party payee.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of Unknown but Greater than \$4,000,580 in FY 2010, Unknown but Greater than \$4,901,584 in FY 2011, and Unknown but Greater than \$5,098,715 in FY 2012. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2010, FY 2011, and FY 2012.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that currently 10 states have drug testing provisions for TANF applicants. The bill will help encourage persons using drugs to stop in order to continue to receive benefits. There needs to be consequences for drug use, and the bill provides the motivation to quit.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Brandom; Terra Guittar, Faith Maternity Care of Mid-Missouri; and Dr. Kevin Blanton.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that it will hurt children by reducing the income benefits if their mother or father loses their benefits. There are very few options for drug rehabilitation services for low-income persons. The better goal would be to make public policy changes to address the needs of those with addictions to get services for treatment. The bill assumes that drug addicts make rational decisions when it's evident that they do not. The bill will actually deter persons from asking for help because they will be afraid of losing their

TANF benefits.

Testifying against the bill was Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.