

HB 156 -- Public Assistance Benefits

Sponsor: Sommer

This bill specifies that a recipient of state Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits who is found to have made a cash withdrawal at any casino, gambling casino, or gaming establishment using an electronic benefit transfer transaction, after an administrative hearing conducted by the Department of Social Services, must be declared ineligible for benefits for three years from the date of the administrative hearing decision.

Other members of the household who remain eligible must continue to receive TANF benefits as protective or vendor payments to a third-party payee. Any person who, in good faith, reports a suspected violation cannot be held civilly or criminally liable.

The department is required to implement and maintain policies and practices that prevent a TANF electronic benefit transaction in any liquor store, casino, gambling casino, gambling establishment, or any retail establishment that provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment. The policies and practices implemented by the department must ensure that recipients have access to using or withdrawing assistance with minimal or no fees and charges. The department must ensure that the recipient has adequate information on applicable fees and charges that apply to the electronic fund transactions involving assistance and ensure that information is publicly available.

On or before December 31, 2014, the department must submit a report to the Governor and the General Assembly detailing the policies and practices implemented in accordance with these provisions and specified federal requirements. The department must report Missouri's implementation of the policies and practices to the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services as required under federal rule within two years of the enactment of the federal law.