

HCS SCS SBs 688 & 854 -- JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

SPONSOR: Romine (Franklin)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with Amendments" by the Standing Committee on Children and Families by a vote of 6 to 2. Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Select Committee on Social Services by a vote of 10 to 0.

This bill modifies the Joint Committee on MO HealthNet to create a permanent Joint Committee on Public Assistance to study, monitor, and review the efficacy of public assistance programs within the state, determine the level and adequacy of resources needed for the programs, and develop recommendations on the public assistance programs and on promoting independence from safety net programs among recipients as may be appropriate. The committee must receive and obtain information from the departments of Social Services, Mental Health, Health and Senior Services, Elementary and Secondary Education, and any other department as applicable, regarding specified information. The directors of the departments of Social Services, Mental Health, and Health and Senior Services must each submit an annual written report providing data and statistical information regarding the caseloads of such department's employees involved in the administration of public assistance programs.

The committee must meet at least twice a year and a portion of the meeting must be set aside for public testimony. The committee is authorized to hire staff and enter into employment contracts to conduct special reviews or investigations of the state's public assistance programs. The committee must conduct an annual rolling five-year forecast of the state's public assistance programs and make recommendations to the General Assembly.

The bill also repeals a section of law relating to a rolling five-year MO HealthNet forecast conducted by the Legislative Budget Office.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the new committee would allow a deep dive into the issues surrounding public assistance.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Romine and Empower Missouri.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.