

MISSOURI YMCA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT

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2006 EXECUTIVE BRANCH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE POLICY ISSUE PROPOSAL

Department: Social Services

Division: Director's Office

Contact Name: Steve Milburn

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ISSUE QUESTION

Should eligibility for child care subsidy be raised beyond the current level (Approximately 127% of the Federal Poverty Level - FPL) to 185% of FPL?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION / HISTORY

The Child Care Subsidy program provides subsidies for 'working poor' parents to allow them to purchase quality, affordable child care, so that they can earn a living. Missouri's subsidy provides assistance only for parents who earn up to about 127% FPL. Once the parent earns \$1.00 over 127% of FPL, they are no longer eligible for assistance.

SB 776 - This act provides that the Children's Division within the Department of Social Services, shall develop rules to become effective by July 1, 2009, modifying the income eligibility criteria for any person receiving state-funded child care assistance, either through vouchers or direct reimbursement to child care providers.

Persons receiving state-funded child care assistance with family incomes of less than 130 percent of the federal poverty level shall receive child care subsidy benefits, less a sliding scale fee established by the division based on family size and income.

A person receiving state-funded child care assistance and whose income surpasses 130 percent of the federal poverty level may continue to receive reduced subsidy benefits on a scale established by the division until such person's income reaches 160 percent of the federal poverty level. At such time, the person will have assumed the full cost of the maximum base child care subsidy rate established by the children's division and shall no longer be eligible for child care subsidy benefits.

If appropriations in a given fiscal year are insufficient to provide the subsidy established under this act for all eligible recipients, the division shall establish a waiting list and promulgate rules for the prioritization of eligible recipients on the waiting list. The sliding fee scale may be waived for children with special needs.

This act is similar to SCS/SB 260 and 71 (2007).

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ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Working poor parents that participate in the Child Care Subsidy Program face tough choices when presented the opportunity to work more hours to earn more money or accept a promotion or raise which may place them 'over the limit' for the subsidy.

Senate Bill 776 (Justus) proposes to change the current program guidelines to include persons receiving state-funded child care assistance with family incomes up to 130 percent of the federal poverty level to receive full child care subsidy benefits. Persons receiving state-funded child care assistance with family incomes of 130 percent to 185 percent of the federal poverty level shall receive child care subsidy benefits reduced proportionately based on family income in excess of 130 percent of the federal poverty level. For family incomes in excess of 185 percent of the federal poverty level, such persons shall be ineligible for child care subsidy benefits.

RESOURCES

Recent news reports on Child Care

Partnership for Children

Children's Division
615 Howerton Court
P.O. Box 88
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0088
Telephone: (573) 522-8024
Web page: www.dss.mo.gov/cd/

Mail: Ken Hussey, P.O. Box 104176, Jefferson City, MO 65110

Email: khussey@jcymca.org

Fax: (573) 635-0215

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ISSUE QUESTION

Should the 'age of majority' be raised from the current 17 years of age to 18 years old?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION / HISTORY

Currently, in Missouri law (Chapter 211, RSMo), relating to the juvenile courts, an "adult" is defined as a person 17 years of age or older and a "child" is defined as an individual younger than 17 years of age. Senate Bill 1054 changes the age to 18 in both definitions.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Senate Bill 1054 intends to create greater consistency in defining when children become adults. Most adult specific activities begin when a person turns 18. Under current law parents are still responsible for their children, yet there are no provisions requiring children to obey their parents or stay in school once they reach age 17.

SB 1054 - This act expands the jurisdiction of juvenile courts to include individuals who are over seventeen years of age but not yet eighteen years of age, for the sole purpose of status offenses, by modifying the definitions of "child," "adult," and "status offense."

All law enforcement officers, juvenile officers, school personnel, or court personnel shall have civil and criminal immunity from liability for any action taken or failure to take action involving a minor child who remains under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court if such action is based on a good faith belief by such officer or personnel that the minor child is not under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.

The provisions relating to extension of the juvenile court's jurisdiction shall not take effect until such time as spending by the state for juvenile officers and offices exceeds by three million eight hundred dollars the amount spent by the state for such officers and offices in fiscal year 2007.

This act also modifies the crime of tampering with a judicial officer to include juvenile and deputy juvenile officers.

This act is substantially similar to SCS/HB 215 (2007) and HB 1550 (2008).

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RESOURCES

Missouri House of Representatives Bill Tracking: <http://www.house.mo.gov/jointsearch/>

Missouri Division of Youth Services:

3418 Knipp, Suite A-1

P.O. Box 447

Jefferson City, MO 65102-0447

Telephone: (573) 751-3324

Fax: (573) 526-4494

Web page: www.dss.mo.gov/dys/

Mail: Ken Hussey, P.O. Box 104176, Jefferson City, MO 65110

Email: khussey@jcyymca.org

Fax: (573) 635-0215

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Division: Director's office

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ISSUE QUESTION

Should Missouri adopt a 'Quality Rating System' for child care facilities?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION / HISTORY

Proposed legislation would require the Department of Social Services in collaboration with the Departments of Health and Senior Services, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Mental Health to develop a quality rating system for early childhood and before-and after-school programs licensed by the Department of Health and Senior Services that operate in this state. Rating systems provide an objective assessment of quality for child care facilities, using a 'five star system.' Licensed facilities would be rated 'One Star' facilities, while the highest 'Five Star' rating includes accreditation. The departments would utilize the model from the existing Missouri quality rating system pilots developed by the University of Missouri Center for Family Policy and Research to establish the system. The system will allow consumers and parents to evaluate and select high quality programs and creates a system of accountability for policymakers and those who fund such programs.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Would a rating system provide meaningful feedback for parents on the quality of child care facilities?
Would lower income parents be able to afford high quality child care without a raise in child care subsidies?
Should government be involved in rating a service industry?
Does government have a compelling interest in ensuring the quality of child care?

RESOURCES

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