STATE OF MICHIGAN

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GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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ENROLLED BILL ANALYSIS

BILL NUMBER: HB 4041

TOPIC: School Attendance and FIP Assistance Eligibility

SPONSOR: Representative Pscholka

CO-SPONSORS: None

COMMITTEE: House and Senate Families, Children and Seniors

ANALYSIS DONE BY: Bruce Noll (517) 488-2675

DATE OF COMPLETED ANALYSIS: June 2, 2015

REVIEWED BY: DA SD

SHORT SUMMARY/HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BILL

House Bill 4041 will codify the Department's policy of regular school attendance, as determined by the local school district, in order to be eligible for FIP assistance.

ADMINISTRATION POSITION

Support

PROBLEM/BACKGROUND

Preventing truancy and encouraging regular school attendance is a priority and a known strategy for interrupting generational poverty. As we expand the Pathways to Potential program, our caseworkers are engaging the family to prevent case closure, remove barriers, and hopefully increase school attendance. Currently, 38 states require that TANF (FIP) recipients abide by school attendance requirements.

DESCRIPTION OF BILL

This bill amends the Social Welfare Act (MCL 400.57b) to include school attendance as an eligibility factor for the Family Independence Program (FIP), which provides temporary cash assistance to low-income families. Specifically, if a member of the program group is not meeting the attendance requirements that are already codified in the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1561) with respect to a child under the age of 16; the family is ineligible for FIP. With respect to a child age 16 and above, that child would be removed from the program group, thereby reducing the grant amount for the family.

The bill was amended in the Senate to require the Department to implement a policy it must follow before terminating a family independence assistance group from FIP benefits or before removing a child from the FIP benefit group. This policy must be implemented within a year of the effective date of the amendatory act.

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS

Pro

- In order to break the cycle of generational poverty, regular school attendance is critical. Research suggests that the child and the family will have a better chance at self-sufficiency if the children are in school. Truancy also leads to higher risk for incarceration.

- As amended, the bill will allow the Department to hold a "triage hearing" with the family of a truant child. Here, a caseworker may assess any barriers to compliance and intervene when necessary.

Con

FINAL PASSAGE VOTE

House: 74 – 36 (with immediate effect)
74 – 34 (concurrence)

Senate: 26 – 12 (with immediate effect)

FISCAL/ECONOMIC IMPACT

Are there revenue or budgetary implications in the bill to the –

(a) Department

Budgetary:

Revenue:

Comments: This fiscal impact, if any, would be negligible. Of the roughly thirty thousand FIP cases, less than 200 hundred cases were sanctioned as a result of this policy in FY 14.

(b) State

Budgetary:

Revenue:

Comments:

(c) Local Government

Comments:

OTHER STATE DEPARTMENTS

None.

ANY OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION

The amended language will allow the Department to hold a "triage hearing" with the families to determine if there is good cause to continue benefits. This is the same hearing that is held for families that do not meet work

requirements. It will allow for the Department to identify and address any barriers that may result in truancy. It is the Department's intent to implement this in policy.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES IMPACT

None.