



POLICY ALERT

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OPPOSE SB 1096 – SENATE LIKELY TO VOTE THIS WEEK

The Center for Public Policy Priorities urges Senators to vote no on SB 1096 because it would hurt families struggling with disabilities.

- SB 1096, by Senator Kyle Janek, would eliminate all of the current work exemptions in the TANF program, except those mandated by federal law.¹
- Federal law does not specifically exempt persons with disabilities, but it only requires states to engage 50% of TANF recipients in work activities. This gives states the flexibility to exempt families with serious barriers to employment.
- Most of the state exemptions go to disabled parents or parents caring for children with disabilities who are in school full-time but whose needs prevent the parent from working the necessary hours to meet the TANF work requirement.
- Parents facing these challenges are unlikely to be able to meet the TANF work requirement. Federal law narrowly defines what kinds of work activities count toward the federal participation requirement, and offers no flexibility to states to reduce the number of required hours to accommodate parents with disabilities or those caring for children with disabilities.
- If these parents fail to meet the work requirement, they will be sanctioned off the TANF program, causing them to lose critical cash assistance for their families as well as their own Medicaid.
- Losing TANF and health benefits undermine these parents' efforts to care for their children. This is counterproductive to the goals of TANF.
- Forcing recipients to participate in a work program that does not provide appropriate accommodations for their disability exposes Texas to liability for violating the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- There are better options. Senator Zaffirini has filed legislation, SB 1861, that would help Texas meet federal work requirements and improve outcomes for families on and leaving welfare. (See <http://www.cppp.org/research.php?aid=656> for a complete analysis.)

See <http://www.cppp.org/research.php?aid=651> for a complete analysis of SB 1096.

¹ Federal law exempts parents with a child under 1 and those needed in the home to care for a disabled child, but only if the child is not in school full time.