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An update on state and federal action from

The Center for Public Policy Priorities

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Special Policy: TIES Public Hearing Coming to Dallas Next Week

The Texas Integrated Enrollment and Services Project (TIES) Legislative Oversight Committee (LOC) will hold a public hearing in Dallas at 10:00 AM on March 25th, 1998 in the County Commissioner's Court on the First Floor of the County Administration Building (the Old School Book Depository) at 411 Elm Street

The Center for Public Policy Priorities and other advocates will host a briefing for interested individuals and/or organizations in Dallas the day before the hearing. The briefing is at 10:00 AM on March 24, 1998 in the United Way building at 901 Ross (at the intersection of Lamar). Parking is available in the lot at Hord & Lamar. United Way's number is 214-978-0000.

It is very important that the committee hear from the local community about how significant changes to the eligibility and enrollment processes for many health, human and workforce programs might improve or worsen access for clients. Brief testimony or anecdotes about client experiences will provide a vital perspective on the far-reaching impact of this project.

The TIES project is the state's initiative to integrate the eligibility and enrollment processes for multiple health, human service and workforce programs. You may remember the significant policy debates surrounding this project during the last legislative session. The result of those debates was HB 2777, which scaled back and redirected the project. This legislation also mandated public hearings around the state which is why the TIES LOC is coming to Dallas. For a detailed history of this initiative refer to Policy Page number 56. Call or email the Center for a copy of this publication at 512-320-0222 or cppp@cppp.org. You can also find out more about the TIES project by accessing the projects website at: www.hhsc.state.tx.us/ties97.

For many months now a team of staff from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, the Texas Department of Health, the Texas Department of Human Services and the Texas Workforce Commission, together

The TIES Legislative Oversight Committee	
Senate	House
Bill Ratliff, Chair (R, Mt. Pleasant)	Robert Junell (D, San Angelo)
Judith Zaffirini (D, Laredo)	Harvey Hilderbran (R, Kerrville)
John Carona (R, Dallas)	Glen Maxey (D, Austin)

with contractors from EDS, have been examining every aspect of the current eligibility and enrollment systems to design a more integrated, streamlined approach that will combine access to more than 30 state programs. They have taken many cues from successful private industry solutions and are developing a plan to reconfigure the existing systems. The approach they are developing would significantly shift much of the initial eligibility and enrollment to a phone access system. They are developing a model which will then form the basis for an RFP to seek a contractor to develop and implement the new system –from computer hardware and software to a “re-engineering” of current processes. At this point the plan does not include any privatization of the actual state eligibility and enrollment workforce. However, their roles and duties may shift significantly.

A team of state level organizations who work on issues affecting clients and consumers as well as unions representing state workers have been closely monitoring the new phase of TIES over the past year. We have been working on a statement of principles, which we believe should guide the development of this project. These will be available at the March 24th briefing. Critical decisions about this project will be made soon. Issues of governance, scope, and cost benefit analysis all must be resolved in coming weeks and a final plan is due to be presented to the Governor and LBB in April.

It is essential that the TIES Legislative Oversight Committee receive feedback at the coming public hearings. Please consider attending our briefing on March 24th and providing comments to the committee the following day. For more information call Patrick Bresette at the Center 512-0320-0222.

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