

2022 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 35

BY REPRESENTATIVES BACALA, ADAMS, CREWS, ECHOLS, TRAVIS JOHNSON,
MCMAHEN, DUSTIN MILLER, ROBERT OWEN, SELDERS, STAGNI, AND
TURNER

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE: Requests a study and recommendations to the legislature concerning means by which to eliminate "benefits cliffs" in public assistance programs

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To request a joint study effort by the Department of Children and Family Services, the
3 Louisiana Department of Health, the Louisiana Department of Education, the
4 Louisiana Housing Corporation, and the Louisiana Workforce Commission to
5 examine the phenomena known as "benefits cliffs" and their effect on beneficiaries
6 of public assistance programs and to submit recommendations to the legislature
7 concerning means by which these disincentives for work can be eliminated.

8 WHEREAS, in certain means-tested public assistance programs, individuals lose
9 eligibility for benefits as a result of an increase in their wages, even if the increase is not
10 sufficient to cover basic needs; and

11 WHEREAS, when a needy family relying upon a public assistance program for food,
12 housing, medical care, or other basic needs has an increase in earned income, the family
13 experiences a reduction in or termination of public assistance; and

14 WHEREAS, Louisiana's major means-tested public assistance programs include the
15 following:

- 16 (1) The medical assistance program administered by the Louisiana Department of
17 Health in accordance with Title XIX of the Social Security Act and known commonly as
18 Medicaid.

1 (2) The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program administered by the Department
2 of Children and Family Services (formerly known as the Food Stamp Program).

3 (3) The Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program administered by the
4 Department of Children and Family Services as the general cash assistance component of
5 the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant (the successor to
6 the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program), commonly referred to as "welfare".

7 (4) The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
8 administered by the Louisiana Department of Health and known commonly as WIC.

9 (5) The Child Care Assistance Program administered by the Louisiana Department
10 of Education.

11 (6) Housing assistance programs administered by the Louisiana Housing
12 Corporation; and

13 WHEREAS, policymakers with differing ideologies generally agree that earning
14 income from employment is essential in order for people to move from poverty to self-
15 sufficiency; and

16 WHEREAS, the legislature finds that removing barriers to employment for members
17 of low-income families who are willing and able to work and helping those who are needy
18 to become financially self-reliant are widely shared goals among the members of this body.

19 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
20 request a joint study effort by the Department of Children and Family Services, the
21 Louisiana Department of Health, the Louisiana Department of Education, the Louisiana
22 Housing Corporation, and the Louisiana Workforce Commission to examine the phenomena
23 known as "benefits cliffs" and their effect on beneficiaries of public assistance programs.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Children and Family Services
25 shall lead the study effort called for in this Resolution.

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, no later than sixty days prior to the convening
27 of the 2023 Regular Session, the Department of Children and Family Services shall submit
28 to the elected members of legislature and to the David R. Poynter Legislative Research
29 Library a report featuring key findings from the study called for in this Resolution and
30 recommendations concerning means by which benefits cliffs can be eliminated.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study and report called for in this Resolution
2 shall feature, at minimum, all of the following:

3 (1) An itemized listing of the major means-tested public assistance programs
4 currently operating in this state along with the income eligibility standards and benefit
5 amounts associated with each program and descriptions of the nature of the benefits offered
6 by each program.

7 (2) For each type of benefit addressed in the report, an indication of whether benefit
8 amounts phase down incrementally with increasing household income or a pronounced cliff
9 occurs whereby income increasing by any amount causes a dramatic reduction in, or
10 elimination of, benefits which is out of proportion to the gain in earned income.

11 (3) For each type of benefit featured in the report which has a pronounced cliff
12 associated with it, options for actions that the state may take to eliminate the cliff.

13 (4) Any other information and findings that the parties conducting the study deem
14 appropriate and necessary for the legislature to consider.

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
16 secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, the secretary of the Louisiana
17 Department of Health, the state superintendent of education, the executive director of the
18 Louisiana Housing Corporation, and the executive director of the Louisiana Workforce
19 Commission.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HCR 35 Engrossed

2022 Regular Session

Bacala

Requests a joint study effort by the Dept. of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the La. Dept. of Health, the La. Dept. of Education, the La. Housing Corporation, and the La. Workforce Commission to examine the phenomena known as "benefits cliffs" and their effect on beneficiaries of public assistance programs. Requires DCFS to lead the study effort and to report findings of the study to the legislature no later than 60 days prior to the convening of the 2023 R.S.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Health and Welfare to the original bill:

1. Revise findings.
2. Delete a reference to the Kinship Care Subsidy Program.