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H.326

Introduced by Representatives Keefe of Manchester, Brumsted of  
Shelburne, Canfield of Fair Haven, Colburn of Burlington,  
Copeland-Hanzas of Bradford, Fagan of Rutland City, Gamache  
of Swanton, Hooper of Brookfield, McFaun of Barre Town,  
Nolan of Morristown, Noyes of Wolcott, Olsen of Londonderry,  
Pugh of South Burlington, Rosenquist of Georgia, Scheuermann  
of Stowe, Smith of Derby, Sullivan of Dorset, Troiano of  
Stannard, Willhoit of St. Johnsbury, Wood of Waterbury, and  
Wright of Burlington

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Human services; TANF; eligibility; income disregard; grant  
calculation

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to disregard  
personal retirement accounts and education accounts in determining eligibility  
and grant or subsidy amount for Reach Up, Reach Ahead, and the Child Care  
Services Program.

An act relating to eligibility and calculation of grant or subsidy amount for  
Reach Up, Reach Ahead, and the Child Care Services Program

1 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

2 \* \* \* Reach Up \* \* \*

3 Sec. 1. 33 V.S.A. § 1103 is amended to read:

4 § 1103. ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFIT LEVELS

5 \* \* \*

6 (c) The Commissioner shall adopt rules for the determination of eligibility  
7 for the Reach Up program and benefit levels for all participating families that  
8 include the following provisions:

9 (1) ~~No~~ Not less than the first \$250.00 per month of earnings from an  
10 unsubsidized job and 25 percent of the remaining unsubsidized earnings shall  
11 be disregarded in determining the amount of the family's financial assistance  
12 grant. The family shall receive the difference between countable income and  
13 the Reach Up payment standard in a partial financial assistance grant.

14 (2) ~~No~~ Not less than the first \$90.00 per month of earnings from a  
15 subsidized job shall be disregarded in determining the amount of the family's  
16 financial assistance grant. The family shall receive the difference between  
17 countable income and the Reach Up payment standard in a partial financial  
18 assistance grant. Earnings from subsidized jobs shall qualify for federal and  
19 State earned income credit if the family is otherwise eligible for such credit.

1           (3) Each family development plan shall provide for an incentive  
2 payment to be paid to the participating family for completing a required  
3 activity or task.

4           (4) Education stipends, employment stipends, job training stipends, and  
5 incentive payments, as determined by the Commissioner, shall be excluded in  
6 calculating the financial assistance grant.

7           (5) The value of assets accumulated from the earnings of adults and  
8 children in participating families and from any federal or Vermont earned  
9 income tax credit shall be excluded for purposes of determining continuing  
10 eligibility for the Reach Up program. The asset limitation shall be \$2,000.00  
11 for participating families for the purposes of determining continuing eligibility  
12 for the Reach Up program.

13           (6) Transitional medical assistance of up to 36 months shall be provided  
14 to families with a working adult who becomes ineligible for financial  
15 assistance due to increased earnings, unless family income exceeds 185 percent  
16 of the federal poverty level, and provided that federal financial participation is  
17 available for such transitional medical assistance.

18           (7) The equity value of one operable motor vehicle in a family with a  
19 single parent or caretaker and of two operable motor vehicles in a two-parent  
20 family shall be excluded for purposes of determining eligibility for the Reach  
21 Up program. The Commissioner shall take all steps necessary to retain current

1 resource protections under the ~~Food Stamps program~~ Supplemental Nutrition  
2 Assistance Program (SNAP) so that the rules under the ~~Food Stamps program~~  
3 SNAP and the Reach Up program are compatible.

4 (8) An individual domiciled in Vermont shall be exempt from the  
5 disqualification provided for in 21 U.S.C. § 862a.

6 (9) The amount of \$115.00 of the Supplemental Security Income  
7 payment received by a parent, excluding payments received on behalf of a  
8 child, shall count toward the determination of the amount of the family's  
9 financial assistance grant.

10 (10) Any personal retirement account or education savings account held  
11 by or on behalf of a member of a participating family shall be disregarded in  
12 determining:

13 (A) the family's eligibility for the Reach Up program; and

14 (B) the amount of the family's financial assistance grant.

15 \* \* \*

16 \* \* \* Reach Ahead \* \* \*

17 Sec. 2. 33 V.S.A. § 1203 is amended to read:

18 § 1203. ELIGIBILITY

19 (a) A family shall be eligible for Reach Ahead if the family resides in  
20 Vermont and:

1 (1) has left Reach Up or the postsecondary education program within the  
2 prior six months for employment that meets the work requirements for the  
3 Reach Up program for the family's size and composition;

4 (2) is receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits and  
5 has employment that meets the work requirements for Reach Up for the  
6 family's size and composition; or

7 (3) is an individual under 21 years of age, has a child, is ineligible for  
8 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits solely because the  
9 individual resides with the individual's parent, and has employment that meets  
10 the work requirements for Reach Up for the family's size and composition.

11 (b) Any personal retirement account or education savings account held by  
12 or on behalf of a member of a participating family shall be disregarded in  
13 determining:

14 (1) the family's eligibility for the Reach Ahead program; and

15 (2) the amount of the family's financial assistance grant.

16 \* \* \* Child Care Services Program \* \* \*

17 Sec. 3. 33 V.S.A. § 3512 is amended to read:

18 § 3512. CHILD CARE SERVICES PROGRAMS; ELIGIBILITY

19 (a)(1) A Child Care Services Program is established to subsidize, to the  
20 extent that funds permit, the costs of child care for families that need child care  
21 services in order to obtain employment, to retain employment, or to obtain

1 training leading to employment. Families seeking employment shall not be  
2 entitled to participate in the Program for a period in excess of one month,  
3 unless that period is extended by the Commissioner.

4 (2) The subsidy authorized by this subsection shall be on a sliding scale  
5 basis. The scale shall be established by the Commissioner, by rule, and shall  
6 bear a reasonable relationship to income and family size. The lower limit of  
7 the fee scale shall include families whose gross income is up to and including  
8 100 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. The upper income limit of the  
9 fee scale shall be neither less than 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines  
10 nor more than 100 percent of the State median income, adjusted for the size of  
11 the family. The scale shall be structured so that it encourages employment.

12 Any personal retirement account or education savings account held by or on  
13 behalf of a member of a family shall be disregarded in determining the amount  
14 of and a family's eligibility for a subsidy authorized by this subsection.

15 \* \* \*

16 Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

17 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2017