

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 46

WHEREAS, H.R. 3113, the TANF Reauthorization Act of 2001, was introduced in the United States House of Representatives on October 12, 2001, which would reform the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program to make it clear that the program's principal focus is the long-term reduction of poverty rather than a short-term immediate reduction in the welfare rolls; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 3113 would also make it clear that postsecondary education is a work activity under the TANF program by providing access to postsecondary education for TANF recipients as a permissible work activity; and

WHEREAS, in the United States, education has always been a route to economic self-sufficiency and social mobility; and

WHEREAS, in the twenty-first century, at least one year of postsecondary education will become increasingly more essential for all workers; and

WHEREAS, TANF does not currently extend our nation's commitment to educational opportunity to persons living in poverty with their children, but who are ready, willing, and able to benefit from postsecondary education; and

WHEREAS, data from several studies has demonstrated that the additional earning capacity that a postsecondary education provides can make the difference between economic self-sufficiency and continued poverty for many TANF recipients; and

WHEREAS, among families headed by African American, Latino, and Caucasian women, the poverty rate declines from fifty-one, forty-one, and twenty-two percent to twenty-one, eighteen and one-half, and thirteen percent, respectively, with at least one year of postsecondary education; and

WHEREAS, further data has found that postsecondary education not only increases incomes, it also improves self-esteem, increases children's education ambitions, including aspiring to enter postsecondary education themselves, and has a dramatic impact on quality of life; and

WHEREAS, now more than ever TANF recipients need postsecondary education to obtain the knowledge and skills required to compete for jobs and enable them to lift themselves and their children out of poverty in the long-term; and

WHEREAS, without some postsecondary education, most women who leave welfare for employment will earn wages that place them far below the federal poverty level, even after five years of employment; and

WHEREAS, allowing TANF recipients to attend postsecondary education, even for a short time, will improve their earning potential significantly, with the average person who attends a community college,

even without graduating, earning approximately ten percent more than those persons who do not attend postsecondary education at all; and

WHEREAS, women who receive TANF assistance clearly appreciate the importance and role of postsecondary education in moving them out of poverty to long-term economic self-sufficiency; and

WHEREAS, as of November 1999, at least nineteen states had considered or enacted strategies to support recipient's efforts to achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency through the pursuit of postsecondary education:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Senate of the Ninety-first General Assembly, Second Regular Session, the House of Representatives concurring therein, support H.R. 3113, the TANF Reauthorization Act of 2001; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly urges Missouri's Congressional delegation to support the passage of H.R. 3113, the TANF Reauthorization Act of 2001; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Missouri Senate be instructed to prepare properly inscribed copies of this resolution for the President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the United States Senate, and each member of Missouri's Congressional delegation.

Unofficial
Resolution

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