

STATE OF NEW YORK

5417

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

February 14, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. MAHER -- read once and referred to the Committee on Social Services

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to creating the Commission to Reform Public Assistance Benefits

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The social services law is amended by adding a new article
2 11-A to read as follows:

ARTICLE 11-A

COMMISSION TO REFORM PUBLIC ASSISTANCE BENEFITS

Section 500. Definitions.

6 501. Commission to reform public assistance benefits.

7 502. Powers and duties of the commission.

8 § 500. Definitions. As used in this article:

9 1. "Commission" shall mean the commission to reform public assistance
10 benefits established pursuant to this article.

11 2. "Public assistance benefits" shall include family assistance, safe-
12 ty net assistance, veteran assistance, medical assistance for needy
13 persons, institutional care for adults, child care granted at public
14 expense, and any other form of governmental assistance for individuals
15 and/or families as determined by the commission.

16 3. "Real take-home pay" shall mean the total amount of income for an
17 individual and/or family when including public assistance benefits,
18 salary earned through employment and any other form of compensation.

19 § 501. Commission to reform public assistance benefits. 1. There is
20 hereby created the commission to reform public assistance benefits,
21 which shall consist of the following seventeen members who shall be
22 appointed within thirty days after the effective date of this section:

23 a. The commissioner of the office of temporary and disability assist-
24 ance or their designee and who shall serve as the chairperson of the
25 commission;

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD05836-01-5

1 b. The commissioner of the office of children and family services or
2 their designee;

3 c. The commissioner of labor or their designee;

4 d. The commissioner of health or their designee;

5 e. The director of the division of budget or their designee;

6 f. Three members appointed by the temporary president of the senate;

7 g. Three members appointed by the speaker of the assembly;

8 h. Three members appointed by the minority leader of the senate;

9 i. Three members appointed by the minority leader of the assembly.

10 2. No member of the commission shall be disqualified from holding any
11 public office or employment, nor shall a member forfeit any such office
12 or employment by virtue of such member's appointment pursuant to this
13 article. Members of the commission shall receive no compensation for
14 their service, but shall be allowed their actual and necessary expenses
15 incurred in the performance of their functions pursuant to this article.
16 A member of the commission may be removed by the appointing authority
17 only for good cause, after notice and opportunity to be heard. Vacancies
18 shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments.

19 § 502. Powers and duties of the commission. 1. The commission shall
20 conduct a study to examine the current payment method for public assist-
21 ance benefits and identify any and all income levels that exist where an
22 individual or family would become ineligible for any public assistance
23 benefit.

24 a. The commission may require the production of any documents or
25 information the commission deems reasonably necessary to conduct this
26 study.

27 b. The commission shall, within ninety days of the effective date of
28 this article, issue a report providing details on the results of such
29 study to the governor and the legislature, and the report shall also be
30 made widely available to the public via, among other things, publication
31 on a website maintained by the office of temporary and disability
32 assistance.

33 2. Beginning within ten days after the issuance of the report issued
34 pursuant to subdivision one of this section, the commission shall hold
35 at least one public hearing in each of the following regions: Long
36 Island; New York City; Hudson Valley; Capital District; North Country;
37 Central New York; Finger Lakes; Western New York; and Southern Tier.

38 a. During the public hearings, the commission shall hear the testimony
39 of voluntary witnesses, may compel the testimony of witnesses and may
40 require the production of any documents or information the commission
41 deems reasonably necessary to carry out its responsibilities.

42 b. After review, study, and receipt of public comment, the commission
43 shall issue a report within one hundred eighty days of the effective
44 date of this article that includes a new payment method for public
45 assistance benefits that ensures an individual's or family's public
46 assistance benefits are not eliminated at specified income levels, but
47 rather decreased to ensure an individual's or family's real take-home
48 pay increases as a result of any increase in income due to employment,
49 and the potential need to consolidate any public assistance programs in
50 order to implement such recommendations.

51 c. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, such payment method as
52 determined by the commission shall have the force of law unless acted
53 upon by the legislature.

54 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.