

AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 17, 2006

**SENATE BILL**

**No. 1534**

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**Introduced by Senator Alarcon**

February 23, 2006

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An act to add Division ~~8.5~~ 8.75 (commencing with Section 9850) to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to low-income assistance.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1534, as amended, Alarcon. Coordinated low-income program eligibility assistance.

Under existing law, various state entities administer programs to provide financial assistance and public health and social services to low-income individuals and families who meet the eligibility requirements for those programs.

This bill would require the California Health and Human Services Agency, the Public Utilities Commission, the State Department of Education, and the Department of Insurance to work together to ensure that individuals and families meeting equivalent eligibility requirements for low-income programs administered by these entities are concurrently enrolled in all available programs for which they are eligible. The bill would ~~authorize~~ *require* the entities to work to create a single low-income program application to cover all services afforded to low-income populations, and *would allow those entities* to establish a Low-Income Advisory Board to implement the bill's requirements.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the  
2 following:

3 (a) Poverty is detrimental to the health, welfare and economic  
4 well-being of California.

5 (b) Almost 5 million individuals in California live at or below  
6 the federal poverty level, and almost 12 million are not  
7 self-sufficient.

8 (c) The state provides low-income programs to assist  
9 individuals during economic hardship, and transition towards  
10 self-sufficiency. These programs include food assistance  
11 programs, health insurance programs, child nutrition programs,  
12 welfare-to-work programs, utility rate assistance programs, auto  
13 insurance programs, prenatal programs, and housing programs.

14 (d) Eligibility for these low-income programs is predominately  
15 based on the federal poverty level, and the percentage of the  
16 federal poverty level represented by the recipients income.

17 (e) The state incurs substantial expense attempting to identify  
18 and enroll hard-to-reach populations in these programs.

19 (f) Low-income families should not be required to repeatedly  
20 demonstrate that they are low-income in order to maximize the  
21 use of poverty alleviation and assistance programs.

22 (g) It is therefore in the economic interest of the state to  
23 transition individuals from poverty to self-sufficiency and the  
24 state should work to expedite the enrollment and delivery of  
25 programs aimed at assisting individuals trying to reach  
26 self-sufficiency.

27 SEC. 2. Division 8.75 (commencing with Section 9850) is  
28 added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

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30 DIVISION 8.75. COORDINATED LOW-INCOME  
31 PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY ASSISTANCE

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33 9850. (a) The California Health and Human Services  
34 Agency, the Public Utilities Commission, the State Department  
35 of Education, and the Department of Insurance shall work  
36 together to ensure that individuals and families meeting  
37 equivalent eligibility requirements for low-income programs  
38 administered by these state entities shall be concurrently enrolled

1 in all available programs for which they meet the minimum  
2 eligibility requirements.

3 (b) The state entities identified in subdivision (a) ~~may~~ *shall*  
4 work to create a single application for low-income programs to  
5 cover all services afforded to low-income populations, as defined  
6 by the specific programs administered by those entities.

7 (c) The state entities identified in subdivision (a) may establish  
8 a Low-Income Advisory Board to implement requirements of  
9 this division.

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