

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 24, 2006

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 7, 2006

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 29, 2006

AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 17, 2006

**SENATE BILL**

**No. 1534**

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**Introduced by ~~Senator Alarcon~~ *Senators Ortiz and Alarcon***

*(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Coto)*

**(~~Coauthors: Senators Bowen, Figueroa, and Migden~~)**

*(~~Coauthor: Assembly Member Coto~~)*

February 23, 2006

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~~An act to add Division 8.75 (commencing with Section 9850) to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to low-income assistance. An act to add Part 5.8 (commencing with Section 17850) to Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to public benefits.~~

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1534, as amended, ~~Alarcon Ortiz. Coordinated low-income program eligibility assistance. Public benefits.~~

*Federal law, Section 411 of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), provides that certain persons are not eligible for defined state and local public benefits unless a state law is enacted subsequent to the effective date of the act, August 22, 1996, that affirmatively provides for that eligibility.*

*Existing law establishes programs to provide aid or health care, or a combination thereof, to persons who meet eligibility requirements.*

*Existing law requires each county or city and county to provide aid to its indigent population not supported by other means, and those*

*county programs are commonly referred to as general assistance programs.*

*This bill would declare the intent of the Legislature to affirm the ability of counties, cities, and hospital districts, at their own discretion, to provide health care and other services to all residents. The bill would authorize any city, county, city and county, or hospital district to provide aid, including health care, to persons who, but for the above-referred to provision of the federal PRWORA, would meet the eligibility requirements for any program of that entity.*

~~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 Business, Transportation and Housing Agency to work together to ensure that individuals and families meeting income 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 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.~~

~~The bill would also require the entities to complete work pursuant to this bill, and report on their efforts to affected policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature by no later than January 1, 2009.~~

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

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

1     SECTION 1. Part 5.8 (commencing with Section 17850) is  
 2     added to Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to  
 3     read:

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 5  
 6

**PART 5.8. PUBLIC BENEFITS**

7     17850. It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this part  
 8     to affirm the ability of counties, cities, and hospital districts to

1 *provide health care and other services to all residents, if any of*  
2 *these entities has decided to do so at its own discretion.*

3 *17851. A city, county, city and county, or hospital district*  
4 *may, at its discretion, provide aid, including health care, to*  
5 *persons who, but for Section 411 of the federal Personal*  
6 *Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996*  
7 *(P.L. 104-193; 8 U.S.C. Sec. 1621), would meet eligibility*  
8 *requirements for any program of that entity.*

9 ~~SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the~~  
10 ~~following:~~

11 ~~(a) Poverty is detrimental to the health, welfare and economic~~  
12 ~~well-being of California.~~

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

16 ~~(c) The state provides low-income programs to assist~~  
17 ~~individuals during economic hardship, and transition towards~~  
18 ~~self-sufficiency. These programs include food assistance~~  
19 ~~programs, health insurance programs, child nutrition programs,~~  
20 ~~welfare-to-work programs, utility rate assistance programs,~~  
21 ~~prenatal programs, and housing programs.~~

22 ~~(d) Eligibility for these low-income programs is predominately~~  
23 ~~based on the federal poverty level, and the percentage of the~~  
24 ~~federal poverty level represented by the recipients income.~~

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

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

30 ~~(g) It is therefore in the economic interest of the state to~~  
31 ~~transition individuals from poverty to self-sufficiency and the~~  
32 ~~state should work to expedite the enrollment and delivery of~~  
33 ~~programs aimed at assisting individuals trying to reach~~  
34 ~~self-sufficiency.~~

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

1           DIVISION 8.75. COORDINATED LOW-INCOME  
2           PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY ASSISTANCE

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4       9850. ~~(a) The California Health and Human Services~~  
5 ~~Agency, the Public Utilities Commission, the State Department~~  
6 ~~of Education, and the Business, Transportation and Housing~~  
7 ~~Agency shall work together to ensure that individuals and~~  
8 ~~families meeting income eligibility requirements for low-income~~  
9 ~~programs administered by these state entities shall have access to~~  
10 ~~application and eligibility information and forms for available~~  
11 ~~programs whose eligibility depends upon possession of an~~  
12 ~~income below a specified level. The California Health and~~  
13 ~~Human Services Agency shall convene and provide direction for~~  
14 ~~the work of the listed entities.~~

15       ~~(b) The state entities identified in subdivision (a) shall work to~~  
16 ~~create a single application for low-income programs to cover all~~  
17 ~~services afforded to low-income populations, as defined by the~~  
18 ~~specific programs administered by those entities.~~

19       ~~(c) The state entities identified in subdivision (a) may establish~~  
20 ~~a low-income advisory board to implement requirements of this~~  
21 ~~division.~~

22       ~~(d) The state entities identified in subdivision (a) shall~~  
23 ~~complete work pursuant to this section, and report on their efforts~~  
24 ~~to the affected policy and budget committees of the Legislature,~~  
25 ~~by no later than January 1, 2009.~~