

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Resolution HHS-17-37

A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE REPEAL OF THE MAXIMUM FAMILY GRANT RULE

WHEREAS, existing state law requires each county to provide cash assistance and other social services to needy families;

WHEREAS, the Maximum Family Grant (MFG) rule prevents parents receiving assistance from receiving a grant for any child born to the household while any member of the household is receiving aid;

WHEREAS, if the MFG rule was repealed, the amount most households would receive in additional benefits is hardly enough to pay for the child's basic needs and without it, these children face increased risk of homelessness and other hardship associated with extreme poverty;

WHEREAS, the MFG policy is intended to control impoverished parents' choices about the size of their families and when to conceive through the threat of economic hardship;

WHEREAS, the MFG rule has not led to changes in birthrates among poor women but has resulted in women being forced to make desperate decisions that endanger the health and safety of themselves and their children;

WHEREAS, most state laws allow few exemptions to the MFG rule, including when a child is conceived as a result of incest or rape or from a failure of contraceptives, but only for those contraceptives identified in state statute, thus forcing mothers to decide between disclosing personal and confidential medical information or going without a basic need grant for their child;

WHEREAS, of the 24 states that initially adopted child exclusion policies, nine have now repealed them, citing the policies' ineffectiveness to achieve the intended goal and its impact on reproductive privacy and child wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, repeal of the MFG rule will also free caseworkers to work with families helping them obtain the services they need to move toward reentering the workforce instead of spending their limited time determining whether children are subject to the MFG rule;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) supports repealing Maximum Family Grant rules, to prevent the harmful health and human development consequences of denying services to infants and to restore reproductive privacy to families receiving aid;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators urges the passage of state bills which would repeal of the Maximum Family Grant rules in their respective states; and

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BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials as appropriate.

SPONSOR: Senator Holly J. Mitchell (CA)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Health and Human Services Policy Committee

Certified by Committee Co-Chair: Representative Mia Jones (FL)

Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 3, 2016

Ratification is certified by: Senator Catherine Pugh (MD), President