

Assembly Bill 910

CalWORKS FAMILY UNITY ACT

INTRODUCTION DATE FEBRUARY 16TH 2017

Assemblyman Sebastian Ridley-Thomas 54th District

BACKGROUND

Existing law requires each county to provide cash assistance and other social services to needy families through the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program using federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families block grant program, state, and county funds.

SUMMARY

Today, nearly 1 in 4 children live in poverty in California. The CalWORKs program was established 15 years ago to protect children living in poverty and provide assistance to families so that children can be cared by their own family while supporting parents to prepare for, secure or maintain work. California impoverished families have the highest supplemental poverty rate in the nation.

Maintaining family unity is not always in the best interest of children. However, for many children familial relationships can act as an important tool to prevent or ameliorate the toxic stress of deep poverty. Children in a two-parent family have a better chance of avoiding deep poverty.

EXISTING LAW

Current law prohibits a two-parent family to qualify for CalWORKs if the primary wage earner is working over 100 hours a month regardless of their income. This rule assumes that a family working more than 100 hours per month would earn an income above the income threshold. While it should be the case, it is unfortunately not. Existing law exempts a person with a disability, as specified, from participation in welfare-to-work activities for the same number of hours per week as an adult in an assistance unit that includes only one adult.

THIS BILL

AB 910 will end the CalWORKs work penalty for two-parent intact families of California. This bill would require that aid be granted to a family with a related child who is under 18 years of age if the family meets applicable eligibility requirements, without regard to the absence or employment status of the parent.

SUPPORT

- This bill is sponsored Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations.