



Legislative Commission on the Economic Status of Women

Newsletter #184

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Steve Kelley, Hopkins
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IN THIS ISSUE

This issue summarizes legislation passed during the 1993 legislative session that ended May 17 and during a one-day special session May 27. Included are issues the Commission had on its legislative agenda and related legislation of interest to women.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A May newsletter was not published.

The Commission will be holding public hearings around the state and would like to hear from you if your community is interested in hosting a hearing. Hearings can cover a specific topic or can be open discussions of the status of women and how state policy can affect it. Please call the Commission office if you have hearing suggestions.

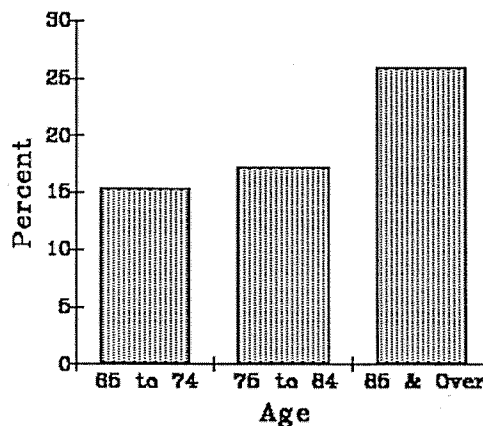
CORRECTION

In the April newsletter on the elderly in Minnesota and the U.S., a chart and the text incorrectly stated that most elderly are covered by the federal Medicaid program. Correctly, most elderly are covered by the federal *Medicare* program. Thank you to our faithful readers who pointed out this error.

The corrected text and chart follow. Data are from "Sixty-Five Plus in America," a publication of the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Nearly all elderly people are covered by Medicare, the federal health insurance program covering most medical expenses for persons over 65. In addition to Medicare, 74 percent of persons ages 65 to 84 are also covered by private medical insurance, although this is less likely as persons get older. Private insurance covers some or all medical expenses not covered by the Medicare program.

Elderly Covered by Medicare Only



Legislation Approved in 1993

The chapter number indicated at the end of the sections below indicate where the legislation will appear in the publication of the session laws. The notation SS indicates the legislation was passed during the one-day special session.

PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN

Commission on the Economic Status of Women

Appropriates \$355,000 for the Legislative Commission on the Economic Status of Women. **CHAP 192**

Battered women's programs

Appropriates \$400,000 for additional battered women's shelters.

Appropriates \$1.3 million for operation of the existing battered women's programs and shelters. **CHAP 146**

FAMILY LAW

Appropriates \$1.6 million to improve access of low income clients to legal representation in family law matters. **CHAP 192**

Provides for withholding of income tax refunds for delinquent spousal maintenance. Allows occupational licenses to be reviewed for suspension in cases of delinquency on spousal maintenance. Responsibilities for medical and dental insurance and uninsured costs must be assigned in child support. Provides for notices to be included in all court orders relating to child support, spousal maintenance, custody and visitation. The notices relate to payment methods, visitation violations, laws governing payments, parental rights of each party, change of addresses, late payment notices and judgments and medical and dental insurance requirements.

Requires district court clerks to make forms for applying for a cost-of-living adjustment in spousal maintenance and/or child support available. **CHAP 322**

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Stalking and harassment

Expands the definition of harassment to outlaw "targeted residential picketing" and attending events after being told that it is harassment. Residential picketing includes activities aimed at affecting the safety, security or privacy of the residence or preventing access to or egress from the resident by the occupant. Violations are a misdemeanor

punishable by imprisonment up to 90 days or fine up to \$700. Repeat violations become gross misdemeanors punished by one year imprisonment or a fine up to \$3,000 or both.

Expands harassment definition to include conduct that would cause a person to feel oppressed, persecuted or intimidated. These activities include: purposely injuring the personal property or rights of another; stalking, following or pursuing; trespassing on property; repeated telephoning; or repeated mailings or deliveries to the victim. These actions become a felony if: the victim's race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age or national origin was a factor; a weapon is used; or the victim is under age 18. This law became effective June 1, 1993. **CHAP 326**

Allows owners registering motor vehicles with the state to keep their residence address private for safety purposes by written request. These owners must agree to have all motor vehicle correspondence sent to a separate mailing address that will be kept confidential.

Post-secondary training

Appropriates \$400,000 to the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) to design a program for training students on violence issues. Students in teaching, school administration, law enforcement, medical and mental health, social work, guidance counseling or other education and human service programs are included. **CHAP 326**

Creates a higher education center on violence and abuse at one public or private post-secondary school chosen by HECB. The center will provide curriculum and other violence resources and educational opportunities for faculty, students and staff. The center may fund pilot projects to develop violence prevention curricula. The center will convene task forces of various professional fields to review regulations, licensing and accreditation standards to determine if professionals are adequately prepared and updated on violence and abuse issues. **CHAP 326**

Violence prevention grants

Appropriates \$400,000 for community violence prevention councils and \$1 million for violence prevention grants that can be used for curriculum development in the schools. Appropriates an additional \$3 million for violence prevention education grants. **CHAPS 224 & 326**

Judicial education

Adds harassment and stalking laws to the Supreme Court's judicial education program of ongoing training for district

court judges. Requires training for county and city attorneys. These provisions take effect the day after the bill is enacted. **CHAP 326**

CHILD CARE

Appropriates an additional \$3.5 million for the Basic Sliding Fee Child Care program.

Re-allocates \$600,000 of federal child care funds to counties with insufficient Basic Sliding Fee child care funds to serve all enrolled families. This is a one time shift to remedy a problem caused by changing the allocation formula. **SS CHAP 1**

Makes public certain data regarding criminal convictions of applicants for family child care or child care center licenses. Licensees can be disqualified because of previous crimes. Licensees can ask for a reconsideration. **CHAP 171**

Prohibits smoking during hours of operation in family child care homes licensed by the state of Minnesota effective March 1994. **CHAP 14**

Appropriates \$54,000 from the Early Childhood Care & Education Council to be used for a pilot child care workers training program, including an apprenticeship component. Child care workers will be trained to qualify as assistant teachers, teachers and in-service trainers or mentors. **SS CHAP 1**

Provides funding to the Higher Education Coordinating Board to provide technical support to post-secondary schools in providing innovative child care options for students.

Appropriates \$7.1 million to the post-secondary child care program which subsidizes child care costs of students during school hours. **SS CHAP 2**

Allows jurors in court to be reimbursed for any additional child care expenses incurred as a result of jury duty, at rates determined by the Supreme Court. **CHAP 192**

PATERNITY

Allows the paternity of a child born to unmarried parents to be established by signing a "recognition of parentage" form, rather than having to go to court. The recognition of parentage is witnessed by a notary public and filed with the state registrar of vital statistics. This recognition can be the basis for awarding custody or visitation to either parent or establishing child support or other legal obligations. The Department of Human Services must prepare the form and provide educational materials to help the mother and father make the decision to establish paternity. Hospitals will

distribute these materials to new parents and make the parentage forms available. **SS CHAP 2**

AFDC

Allows the state to seek permission from the federal government to raise the maximum allowable value of a car to \$4,500 in determining eligibility for AFDC. The state may also seek permission to allow dependent children and minor caretakers attending school at least half-time in AFDC families to save any earned income without disqualifying the family from assistance.

Appropriates \$200,000 for supplementary grants to AFDC recipients to cover such expenses as major home and appliance repair, utilities, supplementary dietary needs or furniture or appliance replacement. **SS CHAP 1**

CHILD SUPPORT

Income withholding

Allows for automatic income withholding for child support payments to occur at the written request of the obligor or by the custodial parent's motion in court. Creates a \$15 monthly fee to the child support enforcement office for obligors if their income is being withheld but they are not using other collection services of the child support enforcement offices.

Describes the distribution of withheld income for child support when there is more than one withholding order for the same employee. **SS CHAP 1**

Medical and child care expenses

Requires that any new child support and maintenance orders require obligors to keep the public authority informed of their current employer and whether any employment-related health insurance coverage is available. **SS CHAP 1**

Requires the parent with the best available medical insurance to provide coverage for the child. If the employer is self-insured and does not offer dependent coverage, an obligor is required to obtain dependent coverage. If insurance is not available to either parent, the court can require the obligor to pay \$50 or more per month toward the children's medical and dental expenses or toward insurance. Medical and dental expenses include orthodontia and eye care. If each parent has the ability to pay, courts may apportion medical and dental expenses between them. Medical providers must reimburse the parent for any pre-payments if covered by insurance and mail any information about the child's coverage to both parents.

Requires employers to ask new employees if they are under court order to provide medical coverage. Employers are

