

STORAGE NAME: h2175a.hhs

DATE: April 18, 2000

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AS REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS
ANALYSIS**

BILL #: HB 2175 (PCB00-01.rea)

RELATING TO: Temporary Decennial Census Employment

SPONSOR(S): Committee on Reapportionment

TIED BILL(S):

ORIGINATING COMMITTEE(S)/COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERENCE:

- (1) REAPPORTIONMENT YEAS 13 NAYS 0
 - (2) HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS YEAS 8 NAYS 0
 - (3)
 - (4)
 - (5)
-

SUMMARY:

This bill provides that income earned as a temporary federal census worker shall be disregarded in determination of eligibility for the WAGES program under Chapter 414, F.S., subsidized child care under s. 402.3015, F.S., and any other social or economic assistance funded through the state share of the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant funds.

It will provide this exemption for 120 days or less from January 1, 2000 to December 31, 2000 for temporary federal census workers hired by the U.S. Department of Commerce as census-takers or block canvassers. This 120 day period covers the main employment period for such workers during the major nonresponse follow-up and quality check interviewing phase of the U.S. census during April - August 2000.

Based on our committee's hearings on improving the count in Census 2000, the 1990 federal census had a significant undercount in inner-city neighborhoods with a high minority population. Testimony by the U.S. Census Monitoring Board, an oversight agency of the U.S. Congress, indicated that a key solution to resolving this problem is to hire enumerators to work in their local neighborhoods. One of the major reasons for the undercount is suspicion of strangers working for the government asking questions as well as the linguistic isolation of households with a limited knowledge of English. This bill will encourage community-based enumeration by eliminating the possibility that those on public assistance will lose their benefits when working as a temporary census worker. It will help overcome these barriers to a complete and accurate census by increasing the number of enumerators who are familiar with the area, residents and language of these hard-to-count areas.

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS:

A. DOES THE BILL SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- 1. Less Government Yes No N/A
- 2. Lower Taxes Yes No N/A
- 3. Individual Freedom Yes No N/A
- 4. Personal Responsibility Yes No N/A

Yes, by encouraging the hiring of low income individuals who will receive work experience and learn valuable skills which can lead to permanent employment.

- 5. Family Empowerment Yes No N/A

Yes, by encouraging the hiring of low income individuals who will receive income and work experience which will benefit their families.

For any principle that received a "no" above, please explain:

B. PRESENT SITUATION:

Presently, the income of temporary census workers in Florida is exempt in determining eligibility for Food Stamps, Medicaid and CHIP (Child Health Insurance Program) due to federal agency rules. Florida is one of only 26 states, including California and New York, which do not presently exempt the income of temporary census workers from social or economic assistance supported by TANF block grant funds.

In the 1990 census, there was a nationwide federal exemption for census workers from public assistance financial eligibility requirements. The U.S. House Government Reform Committee has passed H.R. 683, which would provide a similar national exemption. According to the office of the bill's sponsor, Congresswoman Carrie Meek of Florida, it is unlikely that this legislation will pass the House in time to assist Census 2000 in hiring enumerators. Since the last census, welfare reform legislation has required states to determine the eligibility standards for these public assistance programs instead of the federal government.

A recent report by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) indicates that as of March 2, 2000, the Atlanta Regional Office of the U.S. Census Bureau (which oversees Florida, Georgia and Alabama) had one of the lowest rates of reaching their goal of hiring qualified applicants - 61 per cent compared to a national average of 74 per cent. The GAO report states that based on experience from the 1990 census such staffing shortages "could delay the completion of non-response follow up in some locations and compromise data quality."

C. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

This bill is designed to improve the count for Census 2000 in the hard-to-count neighborhoods by encouraging the hiring of census enumerators in these key areas. It should improve Florida's effort to obtain a more accurate and complete count, which will result in our state and its communities receiving a more equitable share of Federal funding.

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A more accurate count will also improve our state's chances for an additional Congressional seat which will be based on the count in Census 2000.

D. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:

This section need be completed only in the discretion of the Committee.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

N/A

2. Expenditures:

See fiscal comments section below.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

N/A

2. Expenditures:

N/A

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

N/A

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

According to the Department of Children and Family Services this bill will have a minimal negative impact. A study is being conducted on the impact of the Medicaid exemption but it will not be available until after Census 2000 ends its field operations.

III. CONSEQUENCES OF ARTICLE VII, SECTION 18 OF THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION:

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

N/A

B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:

N/A

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C. REDUCTION OF STATE TAX SHARED WITH COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES:

N/A

IV. COMMENTS:

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

N/A

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

N/A

C. OTHER COMMENTS:

N/A

V. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

N/A

VI. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON REAPPORTIONMENT:

Prepared by:

Staff Director:

Jay O'Callaghan

Todd Thomson

AS REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
APPROPRIATIONS:

Prepared by:

Staff Director:

Tom Weaver

Lynn Dixon